

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Socialists launch fund for election campaign in 2000

— PAGE 4

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Struggle continues to get Navy out of Vieques

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

One year after the death of David Sanes, a security guard killed when a U.S. Navy warplane "accidentally" dropped a 500-pound bomb on Vieques, protests demanding the Navy leave this Puerto Rican island continue. Actions were held the week of April 19, the anniversary of Sanes's death, in Vieques as well as in Washington, D.C., and several other cities across the United States.

Over the past year, hundreds of demonstrators have maintained protest camps—now numbering 13—on the bombing range, and the Pentagon has suspended target practice on the island.

The battle over Vieques has become the focal point of the resurgence of the anticolonial movement in Puerto Rico, where political actions of all kinds around this issue—picket lines, campus teach-ins, forums, rallies, hunger strikes, cultural festivals, and demonstrations of up to 80,000—continue unabated.

This movement has increasingly struck a chord among Puerto Rican workers and youth in the United States.

The Clinton administration, concerned about the broadening of this fight, reached an agreement with the pro-statehood governor of Puerto Rico, Pedro Rosselló of the New Progressive Party (PNP), to try to defuse the crisis. According to the agreement, the Navy would resume bombing on the island and then leave Vieques in 2003 if island residents voted for that in a referendum. The deal has been sharply denounced by opponents of the U.S. military presence

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Stepped-up pace needed in subscription campaign

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

"I appreciate your reporting of events that 'big business' papers won't report in order to keep the masses unenlightened," wrote Ray Delarwelle, a locked-out steelworker at AK Steel in Mansfield, Ohio. Delarwelle recently renewed his subscription to the *Militant* for one year. Many other unionists engaged in labor battles and farmers fighting to defend their land also appreciate reading and need the news and analysis provided in the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and the Marxist magazine *New International*.

Now is the best time to step up the pace of the circulation campaign and get hundreds more fighters reading the socialist publications each week. A serious, well-planned effort is needed to get the subscription drive on schedule. Last week supporters of the campaign to win new readers to the socialist press sold 89 subscriptions to the *Militant*, 25 PM subs and 32 copies of *New International*. Supporters need to sell 169 *Militant* subscriptions, 43 PM subscriptions, and 79 NIs each week for the remaining five weeks to make the international goals.

The April 29-May 7 target week is an
Continued on Page 5

Striking janitors win wide solidarity in Los Angeles

Chicago city workers settle, suburban union walks out

BY MARK FRIEDMAN

LOS ANGELES—Entering the third week of their strike, the 8,500 building workers fighting for a contract with 18 companies remain strong and confident.

Their militancy has changed politics here, from television news to workplace discussions. The workers are members of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 1877.

The strike here has expanded with picket lines now set up in Long Beach, San Fernando Valley, Ventura, El Segundo, Pasadena, and Santa Monica.

Buses from around the county brought more than 1,000 strikers to downtown Pershing Square for a candlelight vigil on the evening of April 12. Dora Posada, a striker and janitor for 10 years, told the crowd, "The small raise we are asking for may not seem like a lot, but for all of our families, it will make a big difference in our lives."

A rally and march April 13 of 700 strikers and their supporters at the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) followed a walkout by SEIU members working there. LAX has been the site of an effort by the union, unsuccessful to date, to organize Argenbright's 800 contract workers who handle bags, staff x-ray screening machines, and push wheelchairs for the major airlines at all the terminals.

Infrequent negotiations between the SEIU and representatives of the 18 struck cleaning contractors in the city have yielded

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Militant/Carole Lesnick

Action in Los Angeles April 12 to support strike against 18 cleaning contractors

Wal-Mart meat cutters stand up for union

BY LEA SHERMAN

PALESTINE, Texas—Fifteen meat workers at the Wal-Mart Supercenter meat and seafood department here held a union representation election April 12.

This is the second vote held by workers, who are standing up to the notoriously anti-union company and fighting for their rights and a union, the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW).

Their struggle has received national attention as symbolic of the growing labor resistance and for the hardball tactics pursued by the bosses. These include announcing after meat cutters at its Jacksonville, Texas, store voted 7-3 in favor of the union in February—the first successful union drive at a Wal-Mart—that it was abolishing meat cutting jobs and switching to case-ready prepackaged meat. Wal-Mart is also appealing that vote.

Union supporter Countee Woodard has worked as a meat cutter in the store for two years. "It's a good thing to have a union. We are looking for better working conditions, better insurance, and more money. Workers deserve this," he said after the vote. Woodard, who had been a member of the United Steelworkers of America for 27 years at the Houston Reynolds Can Company before it shut down in 1996, explained that 28 hours is considered a full-time job at Wal-Mart. Schedules are constantly changing, and insurance and other benefits are minimal.

But the counting of the ballots of the 15 workers was delayed due to a legal appeal by Wal-Mart that is contesting the right of the workers to even hold an election. The

bosses claim that since they plan to get rid of the meat cutters in their stores, there is no need for a separate meat department with higher skilled jobs, and therefore no basis for the election. The ballot box was taken to the National Labor Relations Board's office in Ft. Worth.

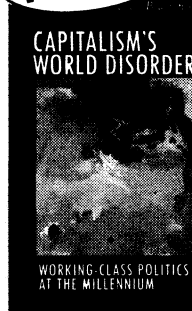
The Palestine meat and seafood workers

petitioned for the union election in the days leading up to the union victory in Jacksonville, 27 miles from here, as a way of supporting them.

Wal-Mart is the largest discount retailer in the world, employing more than 900,000 people, with revenues this last year of more

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Latin America & Caribbean Student Congress in Cuba — page 6

Machinists in Texas shut Lockheed down

BY BOB BRUCE

FORT WORTH, Texas—Machinist union members went on strike against Lockheed-Martin's fighter jet assembly plant here on April 10. The local represents 2,800 workers, 500 of whom are currently laid off.

The previous day the membership of International Association of Machinists (IAM) District 776 voted 993-778 to reject the contract proposal, one recommended for approval by the union's negotiating committee.

The offer was similar to those approved last year at Lockheed-Martin's Marietta, Georgia, and Palmdale, California, plants. It included wage increases of 4 per cent in the first year, and 3 percent in each of the remaining two years of the contract, and improvements in retirement and insurance benefits.

Many workers here expressed the view that given the high profits made by the company at this plant there was room for a better offer from the bosses. After a slim majority voted against the contract, the membership voted overwhelmingly to go on strike. This vote was 1,392 to 275, well over the two-thirds majority required.

The company's offer was rejected in part due to the lack of a signing bonus or improvements in the cost of living protection. Outsourcing is also an issue in this plant, which has had massive layoffs over the years. In the 1980s there were about 15,000 workers in the Machinists bargaining unit.

Larry Ritchey, a 20-year employee in final assembly, said, "We wanted to get a signing bonus like we've gotten in the last contracts in part as a way to help some of the workers who are laid off or facing layoff."

There was a signing bonus of \$1,500 in the last agreement. Ritchey also said that there has been a lot of talk by the company about being "better than Boeing" and that the company should put its money where its mouth is since Boeing workers average \$2.56 an hour more than the Lockheed workers. According to Mitch Stanley, who has 15 years with the company, the wage disparity is partly due to cost-of-living protection being paid at only one-third of the

index rate for the last six years.

The striking Machinists are covering the 10 gates of the plant around the clock and have organized to avoid run-ins with the cops. In 1984 when workers at the plant—which was then run by General Dynamics—went out on strike, several strikers were arrested and some were fired over "strike violence." According to Larry Ritchey, the company and police used doctored videotapes to go after the strikers.

This time around the union has its own watchtower across from the main gate and does its own videotaping to counter that of the company. The picketing has been self-limited by the union to six at each gate at this point, and the company has failed to obtain any injunction against picketing.

The strike has halted production at the plant, although the company claims that supervisory personnel are completing some of the planes.

After the company's proposal was rejected, Lockheed sent letters out to all striking workers and every other company employee explaining it will withdraw its offer



Militant/Lea Sherman

Striking workers picket outside one of 10 plant gates at Lockheed-Martin in Texas

the following Sunday, and urged Machinists to contact the union leadership to let them vote again on the proposal. This pressure tactic went nowhere and negotiations resumed April 15 with a federal mediator. No new proposals came out of that meeting

and the strike now enters its second week.

Bob Bruce is a member of International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 716 in Houston and formerly worked at the Fort Worth plant from 1985 to 1987.

Los Angeles building workers strike stays solid

Continued from front page

little. Buildings hit by the strike are being cleaned by supervisors and scabs. Strikers are increasingly discussing the need to stop the scabs from crossing the picket lines.

SEIU president Mike Garcia reported that janitors have made concessions in the negotiations but that management "moved only three nickels over three years." The union is seeking \$1 an hour wage increase each year for three years. Janitors currently earn \$6.80 to \$7.90 per hour with full family health benefits.

The union has continued to receive broad labor support, including two anonymous contributions of \$500,000 each. Statements have been sent from unions in Pakistan, Trinidad, and Switzerland. Students are backing the strike as well. Santa Monica College MEChA activist Ricardo Rocha said his organization is supporting the strike be-

cause "all of us have parents in the farm industry and the service sector. My mom is an immigrant and she's a housekeeper. This strike helps all of us."

As popular support for this strike spreads, other trade unionists and youth have joined the frequent marches and rallies of a thousand or more. Union officials from the Longshoremen's union, the United Farm Workers, and SEIU locals in other cities are attending strategy sessions.

Letters to the editor in the *Los Angeles Times* and *La Opinion* overwhelmingly sup-

port the strike, although some have called for deporting the majority immigrant workforce. Democratic and Republican party politicians, including Republican mayor Richard Riordan, have supported the janitors in general terms but usually not their specific demands. Some have gotten arrested as part of civil disobedience actions.

Meanwhile, at press time, the building workers in New York announced that they have reached a tentative contract settlement.

Mark Friedman is a member of the IAM.

Janitors in Chicago win contract after one-day strike

BY BETSEY STONE

CHICAGO—The 5,500 janitors who clean Chicago's downtown commercial buildings went on strike April 17 and within hours won a new union contract.

The strike began around 3:00 p.m., when thousands of janitors, members of Service Employees International Union Local 1, rallied in downtown Chicago, stopping traffic and filling the streets with cries of "strike! strike! strike!" and "BOMA No! Union Yes!" BOMA is the Building Office Management Association, the employer's organization.

At around 10:00 p.m. a vote was taken and an agreement announced, providing for pay increases of 45 cents an hour in the first year of the contract, 35 cents in the second

year and 30 cents in the third.

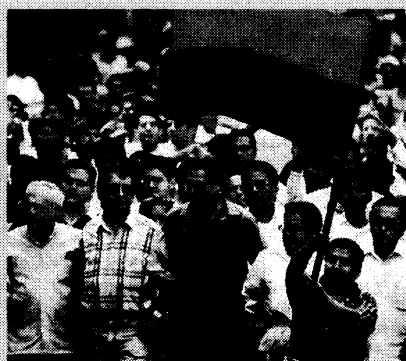
According to Alta Gracias and Raquel Munoz, both office cleaners for more than 25 years, this is the first time in their memory the union has organized a strike. Gracias and Munoz make \$11.40 an hour, which is the top of the scale. A new hire picketing with them said he makes \$8 for the same work.

The strikers expressed solidarity with a second group of janitors whose contract is up—the 4,500 janitors in suburban buildings who are fighting the Suburban Contractors Association. Just as the city janitors ended their short strike, 1,000 of these workers walked off the job, with thousands more expected to join them this week. These janitors are paid \$6.65 an hour, and unlike city janitors, have no medical benefits.

THE MILITANT

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Editor: GREG McCARTAN

Business Manager: MAURICE WILLIAMS

Editorial Staff: Hilda Cuzco, Martin Koppel, Brian Taylor, Brian Williams, and Maurice Williams.

Young Socialists column editor:

ELENA TATE

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Protesters in Canada oppose Ottawa's attempt to privatize health-care system

BY VUK KRCMAR-GRKAVAC

EDMONTON, Canada—"Kill the bill! Kill the bill!" chanted a foot-stomping, hand-clapping crowd of 6,000 people that gathered here April 16 to oppose the privatization of portions of the public health-care system.

The provincial Conservative Party government, headed by premier Ralph Klein, has put forward legislation that would give private, for-profit clinics the right to perform a significant number of surgical and other services currently available free or at low cost through the public system.

The legislation, known as Bill 11, has been the focus of ongoing protests. The day before the Edmonton rally a similar protest, held in Calgary, Alberta, attracted some 3,000 people.

The two rallies have been the largest actions to defend publically funded medical care to date in Canada. Nurses, farmers, youth, older and retired workers, and others took part in the actions, many of them with homemade signs.

The presence of many union members, some of them engaged in strikes and other struggles, marked the rallies. One of the signs read, "Better a left-wing nut than a right-wing screw," referring to a statement made by premier Ralph Klein denouncing the protesters as "left-wing nuts." Many of the participants wore ribbons with nuts attached to them.

A feature of the rally was the presence of groups of farmers and rural residents who came in buses from small communities in the province.

Many people are actively campaigning to stop the bill, including through door-to-door canvassing and lunchtime and after work vigils at the provincial legislature in Edmonton.

The rally speakers included actress Shirley Douglas. She is the daughter of Thomas Douglas, founding leader of the social-democratic Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) government in Saskatchewan that was brought to power in

1952 by the movement of workers and farmers in the prairies demanding the first public health-care system in North America. This gain won by working people in Saskatchewan was later extended to all the provinces and became known as the Canada Health Act.

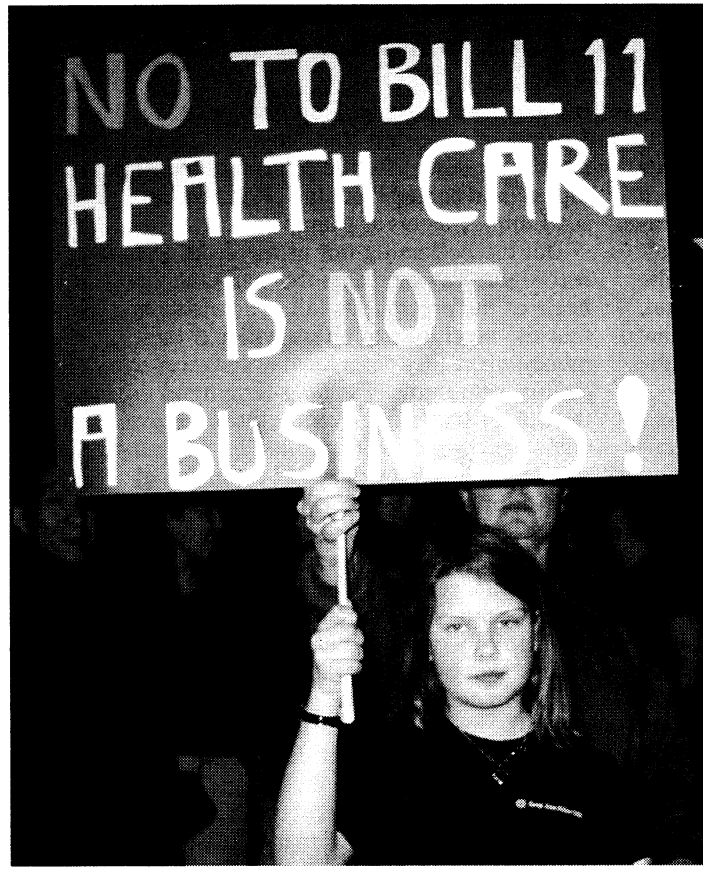
Douglas's statement that the government "forgets how hard we fought for this, and how hard we are going to fight to keep it," brought the crowd to its feet.

Other speakers included Dr. Harold Swanson, a surgeon whose hospital privileges were revoked after he publicly spoke out against Bill 11, and other opponents of the bill.

Some of the speakers presented the attacks on health care by the capitalist government in Ottawa and the various provincial governments as being examples of "opening up" to "American-style" health care.

The fighting spirit at the rallies reflected a deepening resistance of workers and farmers in this region, and their willingness to fight against the effects of the capitalist economic crisis. Journalists at *Calgary Herald*, members of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP) who have been on strike since last November, set up an information table at the Calgary rally and distributed material about their fight. Some 100 press operators and production workers, members of Graphic Communications International Union Local 34M, vote this week on whether to join the strike. The workers rejected the company's final offer by a 92 percent margin.

Three new strikes began in Alberta over a six-day span in late March. At a Canbra canola processing plant in Lethbridge, 165 workers, who are members of the United



Thousands of people rally April 16 in Edmonton, Canada. The action brought together unionists and working farmers.

Food and Commercial Workers, struck against a \$4 wage cut. Brewers Distributor, a warehousing and transportation company in Edmonton jointly owned by Molson and Labatt, has locked out 104 workers orga-

nized by Retail Wholesale-Canadian Auto Workers after they refused to take a 30 percent cut in wages and benefits. The strike vote was 100 percent solid. And 120 paperworkers who are members of the CEP at a Weyerhaeuser plant in Edson, who have been without a contract for a year, are fighting for improved pensions and against attempts to take away paid lunch breaks.

It is in the context of struggles such as these, and the devastating farm crisis in Canada and around the world, that the fight to defend Medicare as a social right is taking place.

Francis Olsen, a farmer from Red Deer, said in an interview at the Medicare rally in Edmonton that he was there because "the banks kicked me out of my house. They kicked me off my land, and now four of my children have moved from Canada because of the way they treat us here."

Coinciding with the strikes and the fight to defend health care, the city of Edmonton sponsored a "Law Day" at the Edmonton courthouse April 15. There, the Edmonton Police Service tactical squad, clad in full military gear, set off smoke bombs in a demonstration of their ability to use armed force in "civil disturbances."

Vuk Krcmar-Grkavac is a member of the *Young Socialists*.

Actions: 'U.S. Navy out of Vieques'

BY RON RICHARDS

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico—A number of events were held here on April 19 to demand that the Navy leave Vieques and to mark the first anniversary of the death of David Sanes by an errant Navy bomb.

"We have suffered contamination, humiliation, mistreatment, violations, forced emigration and hundreds of persons have died of cancer," said Myrta Sanes, sister of the slain security guard. "We can say that since this moment we have lived in a war. Today we say no more!" Sanes spoke to about 100 people who were in the civil disobedience camps in the restricted area of eastern Vieques. She and the others then marched a mile and half from the beach up the mountain to OP1 where her brother was killed.

Eighteen opponents of the Navy entered the historic fortress of El Morro in San Juan the previous afternoon and refused to leave when the Park Service closed the facility for the night. They unfurled banners, lowered the U.S. flag, and spoke with the news media by radio. After spending the night, they voluntarily left the next morning and had a press conference to denounce the Navy.

BY PETE SEIDMAN

WASHINGTON—Waving Puerto Rican flags and colorful banners, more than 600 people chanted, "The Navy is the Criminal! We have to get them out!" at a spirited picket line in front of the White House April 19.

Built as a national day of solidarity with the people of Vieques, Puerto Rico, the action demanded, "Not one more bomb in Vieques." The action also expressed solidarity with the "human shield encampments" put up by activists in Vieques who have blocked the Navy from using its firing ranges there for a year since civilian security guard David Sanes was killed after a U.S. Navy F-18 warplane dropped a 500-pound bomb. Protesters arrived on buses and cars from Chicago; Cleveland; Philadelphia; New York; Newark, New Jersey; Orlando, Florida; and other cities.

The first speaker at the rally was Alicia Rodríguez, one of the 11 Puerto Rican political prisoners released last September after having been imprisoned on frame-up charges for more than 19 years. Rodríguez noted that the rally marked "one year of peace on Vieques, a year of silence without bombs," following Sanes's death. She reaffirmed the solidarity of all the Puerto Rican

political prisoners with the just demands of the people of Vieques for the U.S. Navy to stop its bombing. She saluted the people of Vieques "for nourishing the consciousness of Puerto Rico with their solidarity."

'Militant' team set for Ecuador

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

A two-person *Militant* reporting team is going to Ecuador to cover the May 1 labor rally in Quito, the capital, and other developments in the working-class and peasant movements.

This year's May Day events take on special significance in the wake of the Indian-led uprising in January that forced the removal of President Jamil Mahuad. The final straw that sparked the revolt against Mahuad's attacks on working people's living standards was his government's plans to "dollarize" Ecuador's economy—to replace the national currency, the sucre, with the U.S. dollar.

The reporters are Hilda Cuzco, staff writer for the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* magazine, and Juan Villagómez from Los Angeles, a frequent contributor to the *Militant* on political events in his native Ecuador.

The reporting team will interview unionists, peasant militants, and student activists who have been involved in the continuing protests against the regime, now headed by former vice president Gustavo Noboa. They will also travel to Guayaquil, where the January uprising put in power a short-lived Popular Assembly made up of leaders of unions and other mass organizations.

Three years ago, worker and peasant mobilizations in Ecuador of up to 2 million people led to the ouster of an earlier president, Abdalá Bucaram, after he tried to impose deep austerity measures to satisfy imperialist governments and investors.

The class-struggle developments in Ecuador are part of the palpable increase in worker and peasant struggles, as well as class polarization, throughout the Americas—from current mass protests against water rate hikes in Bolivia to the growing anticolonial movement in Puerto Rico, and stepped-up resistance by working people in the United States and Canada.

Washington, NATO deepen intervention in Yugoslavia

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

Washington and its imperialist allies are pressing ahead with their military intervention and interference in the affairs of Yugoslavia on several fronts. As it entrenches its military occupation of Kosovo, it is also asserting its prerogatives in Bosnia under the UN "peacekeeping" banner.

In early April French troops stormed the house of Momcilo Krajisnik and arrested him. Krajisnik, a high-ranking Bosnian Serb politician, who served under Radovan Karadzic, now faces trial before an international war crimes tribunal at The Hague.

Krajisnik is being charged with responsibility for the killings of thousands of Muslims and the raping of women in the mid-1990s during the brutal military onslaught carried out by the Belgrade regime against people living in Bosnia.

An April 10 *New York Times* article comments, "Western governments... find it more politically convenient to have their [UN] soldiers arrest important suspects like camp commanders and Bosnian Serb and Croat generals." It scored the French government for "providing a defacto safe haven for key

suspects in their sector of Bosnia." There are currently 39 people being detained by the tribunal.

The description of Krajisnik's arrest gives an insight into the freedom the imperialist military forces have in the country and the near impunity with which they act when they make a decision to do so.

On April 3 at least a dozen NATO troops in the French-controlled southern sector of Bosnia surrounded Krajisnik's house in Pale, just southeast of Sarajevo. Troops blew open the door with explosives and dragged Krajisnik away barefooted in pajamas. "If they had only rung the bell I would have opened the door, but they threw a bomb," said Krajisnik's 80-year-old father.

His family was tied up and held at gunpoint during the raid. The children claim they heard English-speaking troops, but London has denied any involvement in the arrest. U.S. ambassador to the United Nations Richard Holbrooke called the arrest "possibly the most important day since the Dayton agreement in Bosnia," pointing out that Krajisnik was the last major opponent to the agreement.

Bosnia has been divided up into three basic parts: the northwestern third controlled by London, the northeastern piece by Washington, and the southern part by Paris.

Referring to the NATO-led Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia, a tribunal official pushing for deeper intervention was quoted in the *Christian Science Monitor* as saying, "We would like SFOR and NATO to take a more proactive role...and set up a special task force that could work anywhere in Bosnia."

The April 17 issue of the military newspaper *Daily Southdown* reports that army personnel have been deployed to Tuzla, Bosnia, to participate in Operation Joint Forge, a NATO-led occupying force that reportedly involves 19 countries.

The Communist Manifesto

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Stock market volatility highlights crisis of capitalism

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

In the last two weeks the stock markets in the United States, followed by others around the world, have been subject to a roller-coaster ride. A steep fall in share values in the week ending April 14 was followed by recovery. The big-business media exuded a sense of relief with the turn around, tempered with caution. "No one can know if yesterday's snapback will last," wrote the editors of the *New York Times* April 18.

The growing volatility of the stock markets—which have ballooned up in a speculative bubble—highlights the underlying weakness of the world capitalist economy. Even amidst a continued modest yearly upturn in the U.S. economy, the stock market jitters show the lack of long-term confidence in what the future holds.

"Dow, Nasdaq Enter Free Fall," shouted the *Washington Post* in its front-page headline on April 15. The Nasdaq, which is dominated by "high tech" companies, fell a "sickening" 25.3 percent in value over the week, in the words of one journalist. This was the worst decline in its 29-year history.

The loss wiped out the large gains registered this year on the Nasdaq index, which has been the scene of the wildest speculation and sky-high share prices, which have no relation to a company's future earnings or assets. More than \$2 trillion was wiped off the value of U.S. stocks in those five trad-

ing days—almost half on Friday alone. *Newsweek* reported that "many Internet stocks...are down 70 or 80 percent from their highs," and named Palm Inc., Red Hat, and VA Linux Systems as examples.

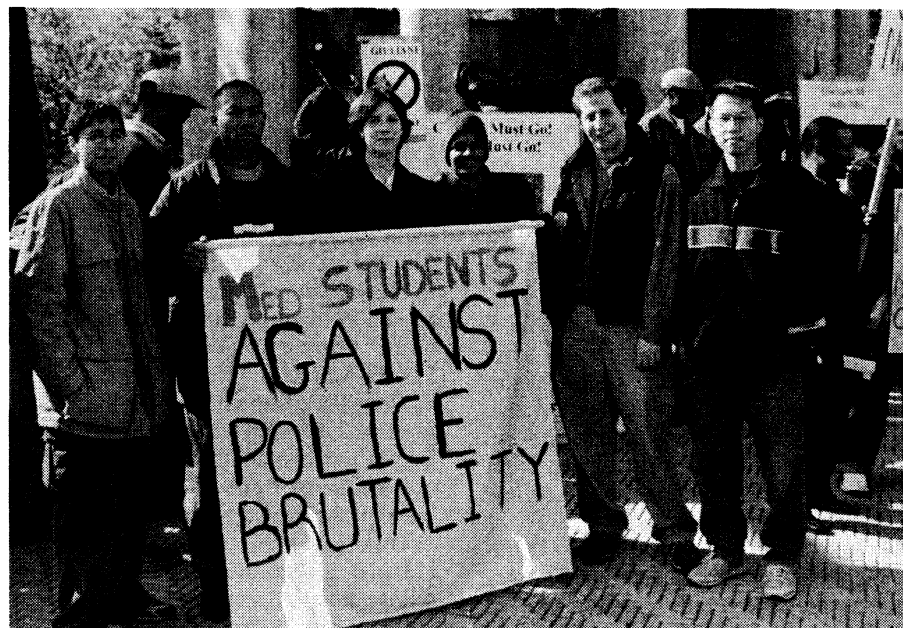
But the bottoming out of the drop, and record one-day increases that came on the heels of the precipitous fall, demonstrates that the wealthy exploiters will put their money where they perceive they will receive the biggest returns. The long-term trend in the capitalists' falling average rate of profit and stagnating mass of profits lies behind the run-up in stock prices and explosion of other forms of commercial paper values.

These developments revealed once again the looming catastrophe a financial breakdown in the center of world finance capital holds for the semicolonial countries, as well as other imperialist centers.

The "stock rout," as the decline was described in one newspaper, took an immediate toll on overseas markets. In Tokyo, shares suffered their fifth-largest fall ever of nearly 7 percent, and their largest since the worldwide stock market crash in October 1987. European stock markets also fell.

A particularly destabilizing factor is the huge level of debt taken on by large investors to pay for their stock market forays. One form of finance is dubbed buying on margin, where an investor borrows from a broker to buy stock. If the stock declines, they

New York: 'No more cop killings!'



Militant/Brian Taylor

Thousands of people—many of them Haitian—from New York and New Jersey converged at Grand Army Plaza in Brooklyn, New York, to participate in an April 20 protest against cop brutality. Above, students from Mount Sinai School of Medicine, who took a near-hour train ride to join the march, line up with others as a contingent. "We organized this action because the community called for it," in response to the killing of 26-year-old Patrick Dorismond by New York cops, said Daniel Simidor of the Haitian Coalition for Justice, which sponsored the protest. "These cop killings are not accidents, but a matter of policy," he said.

are subject to a "margin call" to pay back the broker. The customer has to put up more money to make up for the shortfall, potentially sparking further sell-offs. By law no more than 50 percent of a stock purchase can be financed by debt, but such measures have not stopped

"margin debt" from reaching record levels. "Buying on margin becomes a habit," the *Times* headed one article before the decline.

Two days before the Nasdaq slumped by 10 percent, the International Monetary Fund described the U.S. economy as "steaming," and predicted growth of more than 4 percent. The fact is that the growth is shallow, and is being maintained through deepening the exploitation of workers and farmers in the United States, extracting more from labor of working people in the semicolonial countries, and heightening competition with other imperialist powers.

According to IMF figures, the Japanese economy will grow by less than 1 percent this year, in an international economy forecast to expand by 3.9 percent in 2001.

These "violent ups and downs" that characterize the stock market—the expression used by the *New York Times* editors—are manifest today in a period of relative economic growth. The potential is there for a serious crisis, such as the onset of a recession or other economic disaster, to bring with it a much more devastating fall in the stock markets. Such an event would threaten the banking system, and bring in its wake a collapse of industrial production and trade, with all its devastating consequences for working people around the world.

Socialists raise funds for 2000 campaign

April 19, 2000

Dear Friends,

In a few weeks the Socialist Workers Party will be announcing its presidential ticket. The candidates and their campaign will chart a course of action and present a program to advance the interests of working people in the United States, together with workers and farmers around the world.

The socialist candidates for president and vice president, along with numerous campaigns for other federal and state offices,

are workers and youth deeply involved in the struggles and resistance of working people today. We salute the most recent battles, from janitors striking in Los Angeles and Chicago, to actions demanding the U.S. government get its Navy out of Vieques, to Wal-Mart meat cutters standing up for a union. From union actions in South Africa and peasants fighting for land in Zimbabwe, to mass actions in Bolivia and Costa Rica, and strikes in Korea and New Zealand.

The socialist candidates will discuss with workers, fighting farmers, and youth why it is capitalism—and the policies of the big-business parties that defend it—that are the cause of the economic hardships, attacks on our unions, devastation of working farmers, assaults on democratic rights, denial of women's rights, police brutality and killings, and the racism and discrimination that come with national oppression.

They will present to tens of thousands at speaking engagements, at rallies, on street corners, on picket lines, and through the media why it is both possible and necessary to build a revolutionary movement that can replace the capitalist government in Washington with one of workers and farmers, opening the road to the struggle for socialism together with working people in other countries around the world.

The fighting course and socialist perspectives of the campaign are needed now more than ever. The volatility of the giant bubble on the stock markets exposes the fact that underneath the "economic miracle" heralded by the Clinton administration, the threat of a financial breakdown and banking crisis looms over the capitalist economy, something that would devastate industrial production and the lives of hundreds of millions worldwide. This uncertainty, sensed by millions, gives ultrarightist and fascist forces a hearing, especially among middle-class layers and better-off workers. It propels the trade union officialdom to step up its reactionary, American nationalist, and protectionist campaign, which is a deadly trap for unionists and fighting workers.

What capitalism has to offer working people here and internationally becomes clearer every day. Two roads are being fought out in the factories, mines, and mills; on the streets and on picket lines; and among opposing class forces such as in New York over the ability of the cops to brutalize and kill working people. That of the capitalists is one of brutality to protect their system; that of working people to defend and advance social conquests and to chart a new future for humanity.

To finance this effort the campaign has launched a fund to raise at least \$80,000 by June 4. We urge you to take advantage of this opportunity by contributing to the only campaign that has no interests other than those of fighting workers and farmers.

Across the country—indeed across North and South America—there is a growing spirit of resistance among workers and farmers. Strikes, mass protests, rallies, and other actions are a feature of daily life. Socialist workers are part of all struggles that can help build greater self-confidence and the broader social outlook working people need to effectively struggle against the employing class and their parties and government.

Key to this outlook is solidarity with workers and farmers throughout the world who are fighting national oppression by imperialism and capitalist exploitation, and the economic and military assaults by U.S. imperialism in particular. The candidates explain the central place held in this struggle by the workers and farmers of Cuba and their communist leadership, who overthrew capitalist rule more than 40 years ago and have stood up to Washington ever since.

The Young Socialists have decided to put the Socialist Workers campaign at the center of their activity through the rest of this year, and will be among the candidates fielded by the socialists around the country. The YS will also be organizing teams, setting up meetings, and helping to prepare and distribute literature on the campaign. There are thousands of young people looking for answers to the seemingly irrational workings and brutish nature of the capitalist system. Many will decide to join the YS and SWP by becoming part of the campaign.

The funds are needed to back efforts to place the campaign on the ballot in as many states as possible. Travel, publicity, following up on those interested in joining the campaign, and media work are essential parts of the campaign that need to be financed by working people and youth who support the perspectives of the socialist alternative.

Funds are needed now to help get the campaign underway. Please send your contribution to the Socialist Workers National Campaign Committee, PO Box 14239, St. Paul, MN 55114.

In solidarity,

s/James Harris
James Harris,
Socialist Workers
Party candidate
for president in
1996

s/Samantha Kern
Samantha Kern,
Organizer, Young
Socialists National
Executive
Committee

Socialist Workers 2000 National Campaign \$80,000 Fund

CITY	GOAL
Atlanta	3,100
Allentown	1,000
Birmingham	3,500
Boston	3750
Brooklyn	2800
Cape Girardeau	565
Charlotte	1,200
Chicago	7,000
Chippewa Falls	500
Cleveland	2,250
Des Moines	1,200
Detroit	3,000
Fort Collins	250
Houston	5,000
Los Angeles	6,000
Miami	2,500
N.Y. Garment Dist	4,000
Newark	4,000
Philadelphia	3,000
Pittsburgh	3,000
San Francisco	3,500
Seattle	6,000
St. Louis	1,300
Twin Cities	5,000
Washington	3,300
Other	
Total	\$76,715

Young Socialists Fund Drive March 15–June 1

City	Goal	Raised	%
Birmingham	450	225	50%
Detroit	550	144	26%
Seattle	350	120	34%
Chicago	800	205	26%
Twin Cities	650	115	18%
Miami	400	50	13%
Tucson	200	20	10%
New York	1,000	94	9%
Cleveland	350		0%
Fresno	200		0%
Los Angeles	450		0%
Newark	700		0%
Philadelphia	500		0%
Valdosta	200		0%
Washington	200		0%
Santa Cruz	250		0%
San Francisco		20	
Total	\$7,250	\$993	14%

The Young Socialists (YS) is an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information about the Young Socialists, call (646) 263-8974, or send an e-mail to: young_socialists@hotmail.com

'Militant' to step up pace of sales drive

Continued from front page

opportunity for supporters around the world to wage a full-court press to get back on target. Supporters in the unions need to discuss plans for selling the paper to co-workers, and making that one of the central components of the subscription drive. The sales chart will be posted on the *Militant's* web site on Tuesdays so participants and readers can follow the progress of the campaign.

Many youth involved in political activities, like those who attended the OCLAE conference in Havana, will be eager to read the *Militant's* coverage of the Cuban revolution and the increased working-class resistance unfolding all over the world. One student at a rally of 6,000 people in Edmonton, Alberta, to defend health care bought five Pathfinder pamphlets on the Cuban revolution, women's rights, and the fight for independence of Quebec, wrote Rosemary Ray. "He was disappointed when we told him there was no Pathfinder Bookstore in Edmonton and said, 'Why don't you open a bookstore here? We need revolutionary books in this city.'"

Ray was on a sales and reporting team of *Militant* supporters traveling across Canada to build the upcoming convention of the Communist League of Canada, while reaching out to workers and farmers involved in protest actions. "We visited two cattle farm-

ers in Colonsay who met supporters of the *Militant* at protests by farmers in Saskatchewan several months ago," she said. "They welcomed us into their home. One bought a copy of *New International* no. 4 because she wanted to read Fidel Castro's speeches on land reform and farm cooperatives in Cuba."

From Washington, D.C., Janice Lynn wrote, "We talked to scores of young people who came to this city April 8-17 to protest the policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank." We pointed out that the main enemy was the rulers in Washington, rather than institutions like the IMF or World Bank and that it is the lawful workings of capitalism in crisis that is responsible for the evils young people are repelled by—poverty, low wages and working conditions, degradation of the environment, and other social injustices."

Lynn said participants in the IMF protests purchased 16 subscriptions to the *Militant* or *Perspectiva Mundial*, 100 copies of the socialist newsweekly, and \$700 worth of Pathfinder literature.

The circulation drive in Los Angeles was given a jump-start by "the janitors' strike here with rallies of thousands and daily pickets," wrote Mark Friedman. "We have sold six subs to strikers and their supporters at rallies, and a couple of *New Internationals*."

Wal-Mart workers vote for union

Continued from front page

than \$165 billion and a net income of over \$5.5 billion.

On the day of the Palestine Wal-Mart vote, three UFCW union officials and the husband of one of the workers waited outside until the end of the election at 2:30 p.m. They then went into the back where the ballot box was sealed, followed by six Wal-Mart bosses. That day the company had bosses walking around with walkie-talkies and standing at the entrance watching everyone coming and going.

The Saturday before the election Wal-Mart held a pro-company rally, but only 11 people showed up, mainly bosses.

After the vote, Woodard said in a phone interview that he did not know what the outcome would be. Three votes had been challenged by the union and one by the company. The store had brought in six bosses from company headquarters in Bentonville, Arkansas. The atmosphere was tense for the last couple of months, Woodard noted. The company had pulled one pro-union worker out of the department and replaced him with

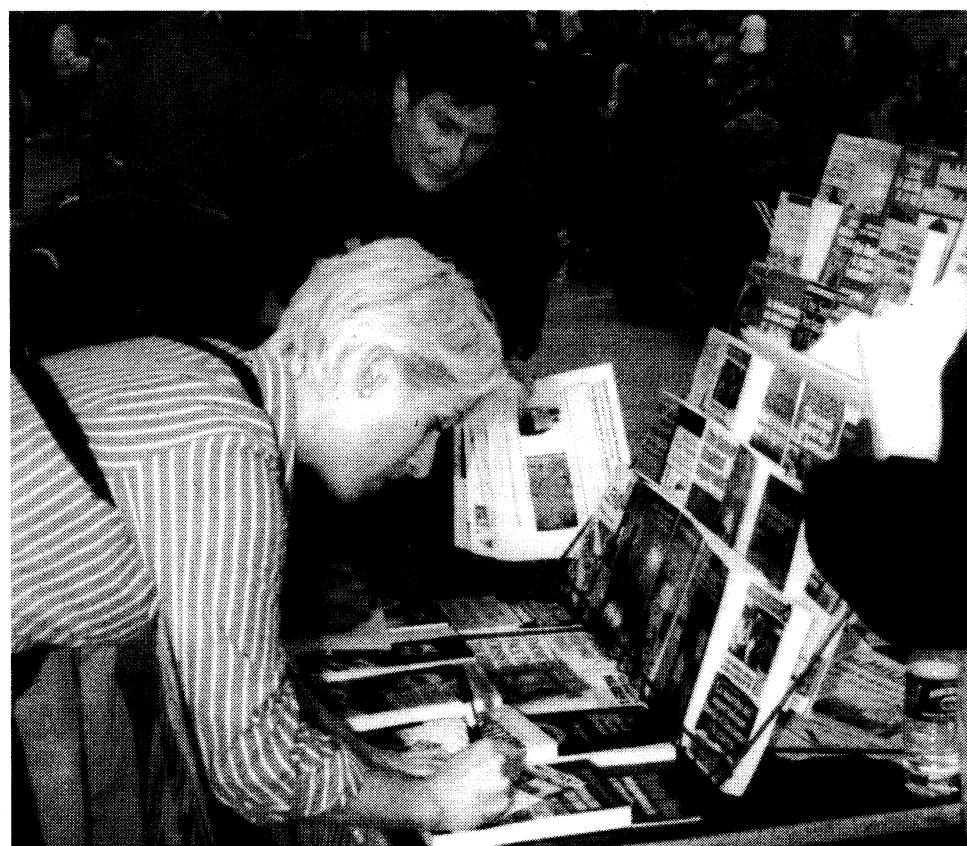
the three whose votes were challenged.

Although there has been no official announcement when the votes will be counted, the company is planning to bring "dignitaries" into the store on April 20 to declare itself the winner against the workers in their bid for a union. The company's claims that it will rapidly change over to case-ready beef is dubious. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, only 5 percent of beef sold in this country is case-ready, and more plants will have to be built with additional technology.

The Jacksonville vote shows that what is really involved is Wal-Mart's determination to not negotiate with the workers who voted in the union and threaten unionizing moves in other stores. Meat cutters in Ocala, Florida, and Abilene, Texas, have also petitioned the NLRB for union elections.

"Win or lose, I feel happy in what we did," said Woodard, who pointed out that the workers who backed the union had the support of different organizations in the community.

Lea Sherman is a meat packer in Houston.



Militant/Carole Lesnick

Participant at Justice for Janitors rally in Los Angeles signs up for the *Militant*

Friedman said they aim to maintain sales of the *Militant* and *PM* at factory plant gates as "another component of our efforts." Bringing co-workers to the picket lines and striking janitors to union meetings are also part of the subscription campaign, he added. "The *Militant* Labor Forums are larger and more literature and subscriptions are being sold there, too."

In Australia a sales team participated in a meeting of the Cuba Friendship Societies where they sold a *PM* sub and a copy of

Nueva Internacional no. 5. "The team also sold a *Militant* sub to a farmer who we met earlier this year at one of a series of meetings called by the New South Wales Dairy Farmers Association to discuss a government compensation package to farmers hit by a proposed 'deregulation' of milk prices," said Bob Aiken. "This weekend we plan to hook up with a coal miner we know from a long strike at Gunnedah a few years ago, and with another dairy farmer who we met earlier this year."

Where we stand

	Mil	PM	NI
Week 7			
Week 6			
Week 5			
Week 4			
Week 3			

Militant/PM Subscription Drive March 25-May 21

Country	Militant			PM			NI	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold	
Australia	12	5	42%	1		5	1	
New Zealand								
Christchurch	12	6	50%	1		3		
Auckland	20	4	20%	1	1	3	1	
N.Z. total	32	10	31%	2	1	6	1	
United States								
Atlanta	30	20	67%	10	4	12	6	
Charlotte	10	6	60%	3	1	5	1	
Chippewa Falls	15	9	60%	10	8	10	1	
Tucson	5	3	60%	2		2		
St. Louis	15	7	47%	5	1	10	3	
Los Angeles	60	26	43%	30	15	30		
Washington	30	12	40%	10	3	11	3	
Pittsburgh	25	9	36%	2	1	8		
Birmingham	45	16	36%	5		15		
Chicago	40	13	33%	15	3	15	4	
Cleveland	25	7	28%	8		5		
Des Moines	30	8	27%	15	5	10	1	
Philadelphia	35	9	26%	10	3	15	8	
Cape Girardeau	12	3	25%	4		4		
Newark	65	16	25%	25	12	25	3	
Detroit	45	11	24%	8	1	15		
Twin Cities	35	8	23%	8		10		
Seattle	40	9	23%	12		12		
San Francisco	50	8	16%	20	6	25	3	
Miami	40	6	15%	15	1	20		
Boston	35	5	14%	10	3	15		
Fresno	12	1	8%	8		6		
Allentown	15	1	7%	2		5		
New York Garment Dist	60	4	7%	20		20		
Houston	35	2	6%	15	3	12		
Upper Manhattan	55	3	5%	20	5	20		
Brooklyn	55	1	2%	10		25		
Fort Collins	12		0%	1		4		
U.S. total	931	223	24%	303	75	366	33	
Iceland	5	1	20%	1		5	1	
Sweden	12	2	17%	4		6	4	
Canada								
Toronto	25	6	24%	6	3	20	10	
Vancouver	25	4	16%	5	2	15	2	
Montreal	16		0%	6	1	15		
Canada total	66	10	15%	17	6	50	12	
United Kingdom								
London	40	3	8%	8	1	20	1	
Manchester	24		0%	2		12		
UK total	64	3	5%	10	1	32	1	
France	4		0%	4		20	3	
Int'l totals	1126	254	23%	342	83	490	56	
Goal/Should be	1100	412	38%	300	112	450	169	

Militant/PM Subscription Drive in the Unions

Country	Militant			PM		NI	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
Australia							
MUA	3	2	67%			1	
TCFUA	2		0%			1	
Australia total	5	2	40%			2	
United States							
IAM	45	12	27%	10	2	20	2
UAW	17	3	18%	3		9	
UNITE	35	2	6%	25	2	16	
UFCW	35		0%	20		15	
USWA	40		0%	3		16	
UTU	32		0%	3		10	
U.S. total	204	17	8%	64	4	86	2
United Kingdom							
RMT		1					
TGWU		1					
UK total		2					

IAM—International Association of Machinist; MUA—Maritime Union of Australia; RMT—National Union of Rail, Maritime, and Transport Workers; TCFUA—Textile, Clothing, and Footwear Union of Australia; UAW—United Auto Workers; UFCW—United Food and Commercial Workers; UNITE—Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees; USWA—United Steelworkers of America; UTU—United Transportation Union

Students hold Latin American and Caribbean

Mood of resistance among workers, peasants, and youth from throughout hemisphere

BY ARIS HARAS
AND BRIAN TAYLOR

HAVANA—"The misery that you described in Latin America—the attacks on public education, the growing or at least persistent levels of poverty, the sell-off of the national patrimony of our countries to financial capital, the military interventions by the U.S. government—is the result of colonialism, of capitalism, and of imperialism," said Cuban president Fidel Castro.

"Neoliberalism is nothing but the latest phase of the assault by capitalism," Castro continued. He was addressing more than 6,000 youth at the conclusion of the 12th Congress of Latin American and Caribbean Students here April 5. "Neoliberalism can be replaced only by socialism," the Cuban leader said, bringing the bulk of the students present at the Karl Marx Theater to their feet for a several-minute standing ovation.

The response to this remark, the most enthusiastic during Castro's three-hour speech, showed an inclination by a majority in the audience towards anticapitalist struggle. A good percentage of the delegates came to the congress fresh from fights to defend public education, resist government austerity, or oppose imperialist intervention. What they described during the work sessions and informal discussions showed a new mood of working-class resistance spreading, unevenly, throughout the Americas.

Confronting "the process of globalization" and "the application of neoliberal policies" were at the center of the delegates' deliberations, said the final declaration adopted by the student congress. The terms neoliberalism and globalization were often used at the gathering, and are commonly used in Latin America, to describe the imperial arrogance and brutal assaults on human dignity by Washington and other imperialist powers around the world.

They are also used by social democratic and other bourgeois forces to obfuscate reality and reinforce any tendencies among young people to see the basic problem as specific government policies that need to be reformed, rather than the entire market system and the capitalist government itself,



"The only way to solve the problems we are talking about here is to unite with the people of our countries, those who work for a living, and take popular power," commented one Ecuadoran delegate attending the Latin America and Caribbean Students Congress. In January 1999, Ecuador staged a popular uprising that led to the establishment of a popular assembly that lasted several hours. Above, demonstration in Guayaquil in early 1999 after eight banks shut their doors in four months as part of government austerity measures.

which must be overthrown.

Broad participation

Just over 6,000 delegates from 38 countries attended the April 1-5 congress. They included youth from 29 nations in Latin America and the Caribbean—virtually all the countries in the region. Nearly 3,300 traveled to the gathering from outside Cuba. About 1,700 were delegates from Cuba. Another 700 came from the Latin American School of Medical Sciences in Havana, which offers courses to students from around the continent free of charge; and 300 were students from semicolonial countries who have other scholarships in Cuba.

For the first time in the history of these congresses, large contingents from North

America took part. More than 250 came from Canada, including 90 from Quebec, and more than 80 from the United States. Smaller delegations came from western Europe.

It was the largest congress ever sponsored by the Continental Latin America and Caribbean Students Organization (OCLAE). Student conferences in Latin America began in Montevideo, Uruguay, in 1908, said OCLAE president Yosvani Díaz Romero in his remarks at the opening of the gathering.

The second continental student conference did not materialize until 1957, Díaz said, describing briefly the events in the class struggle that intervened. The third took place in Havana two years later, and was deeply marked by the victory earlier that year of the workers and peasants of Cuba

who overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista and established a government that defended their interests.

Inspired by the example of the Cuban revolution, 900 young people converged in Havana in the summer of 1960 for the First Latin American Youth Congress. This event took place at a decisive turning point for the revolution. Between June and October of that year, in response to Washington's mounting hostility, Cuban workers and peasants expropriated all imperialist banks and industries, as well as the largest holdings of Cuba's capitalist class, opening the first socialist revolution in the Americas.

Ernesto "Che" Guevara, the Argentine-born leader of the Cuban revolution, addressed the first plenary session of the 1960 youth gathering. OCLAE was founded in Havana three years later, at the fourth continental student congress, building on this continuity and attempting to give the student movement in the Americas an anti-imperialist and anticapitalist direction.

Today, the combined membership of OCLAE's affiliates exceeds 100 million students, making it one of the largest youth organizations in the world.

"Unity of the students with the people of Latin America will be the central theme of this congress," Díaz said. "The framework of our deliberations will be the statement of [Cuban national hero José] Martí that 'Our country is the Americas'."

Struggles spread in Latin America

Following the opening plenary session on the evening of April 1, delegates worked in six commissions for three days. They discussed and adopted resolutions, among others, extending their solidarity to revolutionary Cuba and demanding an end to Washington's economic war, defending public education and opposing race and sex discrimination in school admissions, condemning destruction of the environment, and supporting struggles to advance equality for women.

Throughout the conference sessions, a number of delegates graphically described struggles they've been involved in.

"For the last two weeks, Costa Rica has been shaken by the largest antigovernment mobilizations in three decades," said Kaytor Soto, from the National Federation of University Students of Costa Rica (FEUNA). The revolt erupted in response to a bill the

Youth thirsty for Pathfinder books and pamphlets

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

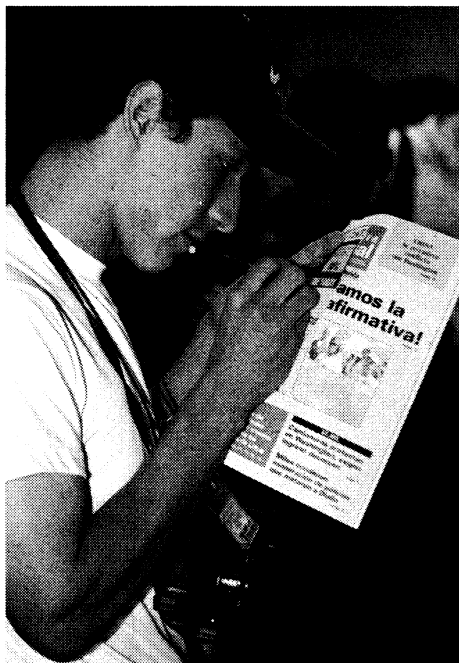
HAVANA—Young Socialists and socialist workers in Canada, Sweden, and the United States set up a number of literature tables throughout the April 1-5 Latin America and Caribbean Students Congress. These tables became a component of the political discussions and debates here.

Participants from around the world were drawn to the table out of interest in the array of titles Pathfinder carries, coverage of world struggles in the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, as well as by the ongoing political conversations participants would be engaged in at the table.

Before the conference itself had even begun, delegates from Mexico, Venezuela, and Guatemala snapped up all five copies of *El aborto: derecho fundamental de la mujer*, the Spanish-language translation of *Abortion Is a Woman's Right*. Books on women's liberation were in high demand at the conference. The English and Spanish copies of *Woman's Evolution, Sexism and Science*, and *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* sold out, as did every copy of *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* by Thomas Sankara, a revolutionary leader who fought in Burkina Faso.

A leader of the Federation of University Students in Jalisco, Mexico, approached the table and studied the poster of the Pathfinder Mural for some time. The mural, painted on the side of the Pathfinder Building in New York, depicted communist and working-class leaders of the past century and a half. It was painted by 80 artists from 30 countries. Discussion about the mural led to another on the struggles by working people in the United States today, and the possibilities the rising resistance there opens up for anti-imperialist fighters around the world.

He left the table with Spanish-language copies of *The Changing Face of U.S. Poli-*



Delegate at conference subscribes to *Perspectiva Mundial* magazine.

tics, *Making History*, and *Capitalism's World Disorder* and the next day purchased *U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War*.

Two Cuban youth picked up *U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War*. "What do you think of that title?" a young socialist asked. "We haven't read it yet," said 24-year-old Levy Alba, an English major at Las Villas University. "But, the title seems to me at least partially right. The purpose of the Cold War was aimed at destroying socialism. Even though those governments are gone people there still fight against imperialism. And we are still here," he said with a grin. "So they failed. And the socialist revolution that happened in the USSR showed that capitalism is not eternal."

Manuel Pradas, his 23-year-old school

mate, added, "We know about concentration camps and forced labor," under Stalinist rule, Alba commented. "A couple of years ago we did not know this, but now there is more available to read."

Nearly 30 copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder*, 14 of *U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War*, and more than 15 copies of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* in the three languages were sold. These were the most sought after titles available at the table.

Participants bought over 40 books on the Cuban revolution, 21 on women's liberation, and more than 25 *New Internationals*. Nearly 20 copies of *Che Guevara Talks to Young People* were bought, promoted as part of the conference by Cuban leader and author of the book's preface, Armando Hart.

Delegates, including some Quebec independence fighters, took interest in Rafael Cancel Miranda's *Puerto Rico: Independence is a Necessity*. Ten copies were sold. Half a dozen participants from Haiti visited the table nearly every day. "I asked them if books like these were available in Haiti," said Joe Young, a socialist worker from Montreal who was staffing the literature table during one of the visits. "They said the only books they see are in people's personal libraries and they get passed from person to person. They took every book they could get their hands on."

The *Join the Young Socialists* booklet was also of interest to some delegates. Five people picked up that title including a young Jamaican who is studying engineering in Cuba and preparing to return to his country. After reading through the pamphlet that he bought, he wanted to know if he could start a chapter of the Young Socialists in Jamaica. Kern met with him about this prospect and plans to keep in touch and find ways to collaborate when he gets back to Jamaica.

In all, more than 300 books and pamphlets were sold at the table.

“Neoliberalism is nothing but the latest phase of the assault of capitalism ... Neoliberalism can only be replaced by socialism...”

government introduced in Costa Rica's parliament March 20 seeking authorization to sell off the power and telecommunications companies that have been state owned for more than half a century.

"FEUNA organized a hunger strike and occupation of the universities," Soto said. "Labor unions went on strike across the country. Peasants took over highways and organized other protests in the rural areas. Demonstrations have swept the country demanding the regime withdraw the privatization bill from parliament." In one such action, 100,000 people shut down the streets of the country's capital, San José, March 23.

Soto and other delegates from Costa Rica said youth and working people in that country expect dramatic rises in electricity and telephone rates if the bill goes through, and, as a result, a rapid deterioration in the standard of living. "The police and the army initially used violent repression," Soto said. "Clubs, tear gas, and bullets in some cases. We know of at least three peasants who have been killed. But people are determined to fight. The 'labor peace' the ruling oligarchy had imposed for decades is broken."

Drawing conclusions from an even more deep-going popular rebellion in Ecuador only two months earlier was the subject of a number of presentations by delegates and of informal discussion.

Congress in Cuba marks international conference

"The only way to solve the problems we are talking about here is to unite with the people of our countries, those who work for a living, and take popular power," said Maria, a university student from Ecuador who asked that only her first name be used. She pointed to the establishment of a popular assembly for a few hours on January 21 in Guayaquil, the capital of Guayas province, as an example of what could be done. "With the proper leadership we could have swept not only Mahuad from the government but the entire ruling class."

"We can't put our trust in the military of the rulers," said Mario Zuniga, another delegate from Ecuador, on April 4. He was introducing a resolution, which was adopted by the congress, extending solidarity with ongoing efforts by students and others in Ecuador to form popular assemblies in various parts of the country and stop the government from carrying through its dollarization plan.

Leaders of the 10-month-long student strike and occupation of the Autonomous National University of Mexico (UNAM)—the largest university in Latin America—were received with loud applause every time they spoke at the sessions. The strike began April 20, 1999, after two months of protests against the university administration's unilateral announcement of tuition and other fee increases. It ended in February of this year, after police forcibly evicted strikers from the Mexico City campus following divisions that evolved in the student leadership.

"The General Council of the Strike at UNAM, the most militant wing of the student leadership, is continuing to push for the six main demands the students pressed for during their struggle and campaign for the freedom of several students arrested by the police during the cop raids in February.

"We are struggling against the owners of capital," Virginia Sánchez, a student at UNAM, said in one of the workshops. "We earned important lessons during the strike. We felt the brutality of the state and we are clearer on the class character of the police and paramilitary forces, the high clergy, and the dominant political parties."

Thousands of students became disillusioned with the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) and other "progressive" bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces they looked to for leadership before. None of these parties backed the students' struggle.

The OCLAE congress endorsed the call by the General Council of the Strike for participation in an international student conference "In Defense of Public and Free Education" at UNAM in Mexico City, April 20-24, which Sánchez and Alberto Torres, one of the central leaders of the strike, presented.

The guerrilla struggle in Colombia, and organizing opposition to growing U.S. government intervention and military aid to the regime in Bogotá, were also addressed by a number of students.

Delegates from Bolivia and Peru spoke about growing instability in their countries and uneasiness of the rulers in each country—as well as Washington—because of popular unrest. Days after the OCLAE conference concluded, Peru's president Alberto Fujimori failed to win an absolute majority in his third bid for reelection and conceded

a runoff to his main opponent.

Mass indignation and protests arose when it appeared Fujimori might try to steal the election in the first round.

In Bolivia, president Hugo Banzer declared a nationwide state of siege April 8, curtailing constitutional guarantees, after widespread protests by working people demanding a living wage and opposing cutbacks in social programs.

Many delegates were keen to learn more about the new militancy among wide layers of workers and farmers in North America. After members of the Young Socialists from the United States and Canada, as well as other delegates, spoke at commissions and other meetings about battles such as the marches to bring down the confederate flag from South Carolina's state Capitol, and its interconnection with dockworkers strikes and protests by small farmers for land, many students from Cuba and other countries sought more informal discussion.

Recognition of Puerto Rican struggle

The struggle to end U.S. colonial rule of Puerto Rico and prevent the U.S. Navy from resuming bombing practice in Vieques had a resonance unparalleled at any previous international gathering in decades. More than 100 students came from Puerto Rico, the bulk of them organized by the University Federation for the Independence of Puerto Rico (FUPI). Ramón Cuadra, representing FUPI, was one of the three main speakers at the opening of the congress. Every commission adopted resolutions calling for solidarity actions with the Vieques campaign and the pro-independence struggle.

“The people of Puerto Rico have no nuclear weapons. But they may be on the verge of forcing the U.S. Navy to stop bombing Vieques.”

Fidel Castro expressed the sentiments of the big majority of the delegates when he said in his concluding speech that the people of Puerto Rico may be close to scoring an important victory against the most powerful empire in the history of humanity. "Puerto Rico is a small nation at the doorstep of U.S. imperialism, under its colonial boot. The people of Puerto Rico don't have nuclear weapons. But they may be on the verge of forcing the hated U.S. Navy to stop bombing Vieques. That's not a small feat!" Castro said, bringing the audience to its feet. The U.S. government is not as powerful as it seems, the Cuban leader said, it is in fact weaker than ever.

The final declaration adopted by the congress pointed to the underlying debt bondage that squeezes all countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. "The foreign debt in Latin America now exceeds \$706 billion, and is ever increasing despite the fact that our countries have paid \$739 billion to service it in the last 14 years," the resolution said.

During the 1990s, a decade that bourgeois politicians and pundits touted as an economic success for the continent, the gap between rich and poor widened in Latin America and poverty rates grew or persisted. According to the Inter-American Development Bank, 150 million people in Latin America today live on \$2 a day or less. All this worries the U.S. rulers, who know that more social instability is in the offing.

Attempts to advance anti-imperialism

Given these realities, the efforts by the leadership of the Federation of University Students (FEU) and Union of Young Communists (UJC) of Cuba—the two main host organizations—to put forward a revolution-



Militant/Brian Taylor

"The misery that you described in Latin America—the attacks on public education, the growing or at least persistent levels of poverty, the military interventions by the U.S. government—is the result of colonialism, of capitalism, of imperialism," remarked Cuban president Fidel Castro during the closing session of the Latin America and Caribbean Student Congress in Havana. Above, delegates from throughout the western hemisphere gather during April 1 rally at Karl Marx Theatre to open the congress.

ary, anti-imperialist perspective found many receptive ears.

Editora Abril, the publishing house of the UJC, made a special effort to promote and make widely available to delegates the Spanish-language edition of *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*. The book was sold at the special price of \$6 at Editora Abril booths and UJC literature tables during all conference sessions and on the premises of the three schools where delegates were housed.

This book was published by Pathfinder Press in collaboration with Editora Abril and contains speeches by Che Guevara. Its opening chapter is Che's talk to the 1960 First Latin American Youth Congress.

On April 2, Armando Hart Dávalos, who wrote the preface to this title and is one of the founders of the July 26 Movement and a leader of the Cuban revolution, spoke about *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*. About 1,200 delegates attended that session, held after lunch before the resumption of the commission on "Neoliberalism and the Role of Students." The event had been advertised in an Editora Abril brochure featuring the book. Hundreds of copies were sold to delegates.

In his speech at the end of the congress, Fidel Castro pointed to the internationalism of the Cuban revolution as exemplified by Che's leadership of the guerrilla campaigns in the Congo and Bolivia in the mid 1960s, with the full backing of the revolutionary government in Havana, to aid struggles for national liberation.

He contrasted the proletarian internationalism of the Cuban revolution to the backing by Washington "of the most repressive, brutal, dictatorial regimes"—from Batista in Cuba to Somoza in Nicaragua, Duvalier in Haiti, and Pinochet in Chile.

It was notable that most times when Pinochet's name was mentioned by someone at the congress sessions, a chant went up by many delegates demanding that the former dictator be put on trial in Chile for the crimes he was responsible for during his rule. This was a very different and progressive demand in contrast to the earlier effort to support London's imperial campaign to extradite Pinochet to Spain.

Castro found a largely receptive audience as he explained how a people, the workers and peasants of Cuba, who were largely illiterate before 1959 could lead a successful

revolution against the "cultured high bourgeoisie." He walked through some of the turning points of the revolution, from the agrarian reforms to the nationalizations of industry and the land, to the quick victory by the militias and the Revolutionary Armed Forces against the U.S.-organized mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs in 1961, to the October "missile" crisis the next year.

Castro also elicited loud laughter and applause when he asked, "How was it possible for Cuba to increase the value of our currency from 150 to the dollar to 20 to the dollar in the last four-and-a-half years? While others go from devaluation to devaluation and even speak of dollarization, which means direct enslavement to the U.S. Federal Reserve?" The reason is that Cuba has no ties to the IMF, the Cuban leader said. "Instead of the IMF and the World Bank we turn to the wonderful collective called the Cuban people. That's how we've been able to withstand the tremendous pressures of the Special Period."

This is a term widely used in Cuba to describe the period, triggered at the opening of the 1990s by the cutoff of trade in preferential prices with the former Soviet bloc countries, during which Cuba has had to face more directly the ravages of the world capitalist market and has experienced a drop in industrial and agricultural production.

Diverging class perspectives

The attraction to a clearly anticapitalist course was not unanimous by far, however. Where students had gone through protracted struggles, differentiation along diverging class lines was clear.

This was evident among those who led the UNAM strike, for example. Quite a few students did not share the revolutionary conclusions that Alberto Torres and Virginia Sánchez were inclined towards. While this was not palpable during the commissions, it became clearer at a roundtable discussion on the UNAM strike. Students from Mexico organized the activity one evening at the Polytechnic School José Antonio Echevarría where they were housed, along with delegates from North America and others.

A number of UNAM students who spoke at that session were clearly influenced by the policies of the bourgeois PRD and put forward social democratic views. They pre-

Continued on Page 10



Militant/Brian Taylor

Ivano Merced, vice president of the Union of the Federation of University Students, shows poster of Che Guevara Talks to Young People at a panel presentation April 2 that included Cuban leader Armando Hart.

From Pathfinder

Che Guevara Talks to Young People

"We are attacked a great deal because of what we are. But we are attacked much, much more because we show to every nation of the Americas what it's possible to be."

—Che Guevara, July 28, 1960

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Fight continues to get Navy out of Vieques

Continued from front page on Vieques.

On April 2, more than 1,600 Vieques residents turned out for a 425-car Caravan for Justice and Peace on the island. "This was our referendum. The people showed their commitment to the demand of 'Not one more shot, not one more minute,'" said Ismael Guadalupe, spokesperson for the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques, which sponsored the protest.

The previous day, 180 Teamsters from the main island visited Vieques, where they held their monthly membership meeting in solidarity with the fight against the U.S. military. They then joined an action with hundreds of Vieques residents at the Justice and Peace protest camp, which for months has blocked entry to the U.S. Navy's Camp García.

Meanwhile, in face of ongoing protests over Vieques, the U.S. Navy moved its March training exercises to the Gulf of Mexico and northeastern Florida. In early April, U.S. warships carried out joint maneuvers with forces from Britain, Canada, and other governments off the coast of Puerto Rico, but away from Vieques.

Navy spokespeople said they had not yet decided whether the USS *George Washington* aircraft battle group will attempt to carry out its planned training in Vieques in May.

Although U.S. and Puerto Rican colonial officials have announced their intention to send cops to evict demonstrators from the bombing range, differences among the authorities have up to now put a kink in their plans. Puerto Rican police chief Pedro Toledo has repeatedly announced plans to remove the protesters, but so far has not tried

to carry this out.

Meanwhile, right-wing U.S. congressmen killed a proposal by the Clinton administration to offer \$40 million to Vieques residents if they accept the Navy's continued presence, an offer many islanders and other Puerto Ricans have indignantly rejected as blackmail.

In New York City, organizers of the June 11 Puerto Rican Day Parade have dedicated it to Vieques and to Pedro Albizu Campos, the historic leader of the modern fight for Puerto Rico's independence. Albizu Campos spent decades in U.S. prisons for opposing U.S. colonial rule of his country.

The dedication has sparked a big controversy in New York as well as Puerto Rico. The mayor of San Juan, Sila Calderón, and officials of the Rosselló government objected to the decision. Former governor Carlos Romero Barceló, currently the non-voting delegate from Puerto Rico in the U.S. Congress and a leader of the PNP's right wing, condemned the decision, accusing Albizu Campos of having been a "fascist." During World War II, U.S. officials and proimperialist forces slandered Albizu Campos as a fascist because the Nationalist Party leader steadfastly refused to support Washington, Puerto Rico's colonial oppressor, in its predatory intervention in that international slaughter.

Nonetheless, the organizers of the New York parade have reaffirmed their decision, pointing out that in previous parades they have honored figures holding a range of political views. Rubén Berrios, president of the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP) and leader of one of the Vieques protest camps, has rebutted the slanders against

Toronto workers strike to back union



Militant/Jay Paradiso

Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) members on strike against Toromont Industries Ltd. in Toronto, Canada. Two hundred workers began a strike April 10. In the contract dispute, the company is demanding concessions that include a wage freeze and an end to the cost of living adjustment (COLA) for unskilled workers. Many CAW strikers see this as an effort to divide the union between skilled and unskilled workers. "They are out to break the union," said Rick Robins, a painter with 20 years seniority in the plant.

The old contract ended February 8. Six years ago the workers went on strike for 17 weeks, winning the COLA provision they are now trying to defend. Toromont Industries Ltd. rents and sells construction and industrial equipment, throughout North America.

Albizu Campos in statements that have received wide coverage in the press.

The controversy has sparked greater interest and curiosity among many Puerto Ricans, especially youth, about who Albizu Campos was and the relevance of his ideas today.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

ALABAMA

Birmingham

25th Anniversary of the End of the Vietnam War. See excerpts from the PBS Film History of the Vietnam War. Fri., April 28, 7:30 p.m. Dinner: 6:30 p.m. Both events at 2232 Magnolia Ave. (Near Five Points South). Tel: (205) 323-3079.

PENNSYLVANIA

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What's Behind the High Cost of Fuel and What Can Workers and Farmers Do About It? Speaker: Connie Allen, Socialist Workers Party, member of Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees. Fri., April 28, 7:30 p.m. 711 E. Passyunk Ave. (Two blocks south of South St.). Donation: \$4. Tel: (215) 627-1237.

BRITAIN

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Imperialists Hands Off Zimbabwe. Fri., April 28, 7:00 p.m. 47 The Cut, SE1. Donation: £2. Tel: 020-7928-7993.

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For more information, contact David Santiago at (202) 223-3915 ext. 308

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AFL-CIO meetings

In Atlanta Sat., April 29, Chicago Sat., May 6, and Los Angeles Sat., June 10.

New York

Rally Mon., May 1 - Union Square, 1 p.m.

Sponsor: National Coalition and Amnesty for Undocumented Immigrants.

Jersey City, New Jersey

Forum for Dignity and Amnesty, Liberty State Park, Thursday, April 27, 5 p.m. Sponsored by Laborers International Union.

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Join Steelworkers rallies

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USWA Local 164 Solidarity Rally April 29, 12 Noon, Iowa State Fairgrounds

Two-year anniversary of strike against Titan Tire. For more information, call (515) 262-4935

Support fighting farmers

Farmers are planning to "sound off" at field hearings conducted by the U.S. House Committee on Agriculture. Only farmers and ranchers will be permitted to testify.

Woodland, California

May 1, 8:30 a.m. Heidrick Ag History Center.

Sioux Falls, South Dakota

May 2, 8:30 a.m., Augustana College Humanities Building.

Boise, Idaho

May 12, 10 a.m., City Council Building, Lesbois Room.

Peoria, Illinois

May 13, 8:30 a.m., Peoria Civic Center, Exhibit Hall B.

For directions or to listen to the sessions on the Web visit: www.agriculture.house.gov

Pushouts exceed enrollment?—The Washington, D.C., school system has long been notoriously understaffed and overcrowded. Now they're hoping to improve the city's economic situation by a rapid marketing of 32 "surplus" school buildings.



Harry Ring

Doing their civic duty—De-

troit auto makers pledged to put more fuel-efficient cars on the market. They declined to say how many or what kind. They did seem to have their minds made up that marketing such vehicles would require Congress to grant \$3,000 tax credits to those who bought them.

Crime Fighters—In Tyler, Texas, a man was convicted for stealing a bag of tools, then a package of cookies, and, finally, a candy bar. He got 16 years as a "habitual offender."

They put more cops on the

street?—New York officials report that in the first quarter of this year, the murder rate increased 12.4 percent.

Tactical dispute?—Rev. Jerry Falwell, the pious right-wing broadcaster, declared he couldn't go along with his political associate, Rev. Patrick Robertson, who, for whatever reason, called for a moratorium on the death penalty. Falwell said, "I personally believe that we need to reduce the time between conviction and execution."

Sound as a dollar—A recent "Making Money" parley spon-

sored by the *Miami Herald* was dominated by words of caution in relation to current money making. The paper cited the wisdom of Marc Gabelli, who's doing nicely in the current Internet bonanza. He commented about when the bubble will bust. "Every day," he said, "we're smelling what's going on. And I always sit near the exit."

Humane—"Asylum seekers persistently begging on the streets will face a new 'fast track' system to throw them out of Britain under measures being drawn up by the government."—The *Times*,

London.

To make a point—Last week's column included an item from a small Cape Cod paper reporting on the new low-rent development in the pricey tourist area. An application included such questions as: If you're a single mother, how often does your significant other visit?, and how long does he stay? Do you have a vacuum cleaner? The item was sent by a longtime reader and contributor. You too can help by sending clippings to Pathfinder Bookstore, 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Los Angeles, CA. 90006.

Ruling-class institutions weaker than they seem

The excerpt below is taken from "So Far from God, So Close to Orange County: The Deflationary Drag of Finance Capital," a talk presented at a regional socialist educational conference held in Los Angeles over the 1994-95 New Year's weekend. The entire talk appears in the pages of *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*, copyright © 1999 Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

BY JACK BARNES

From one point of view, this outcome to what has been called the Cold War is a frustrating one for revolutionary-minded workers and youth. We can see all the doors that have been opened. Stalinist calumnies and political prejudice are less effective than at any time since the mid-1920s in closing the minds of fighters and revolutionists to communist ideas. We take full advantage of these open doors. We distribute books, pamphlets, and newspapers presenting a revolutionary perspective in parts of the world where only

from the pages of *Capitalism's World Disorder*

five or ten years ago it was nearly impossible to do so without being arrested or worse.

Communist workers see the hunger for ideas everywhere we go abroad, whether it is along the Silk Road in Iran or Azerbaijan, or at a conference of the African National Congress in South Africa, or to young people we meet at a gathering somewhere in Asia. We find that same interest among workers and young people we meet in Cuba and fellow revolutionists we collaborate with there.

But there is frustration as well. The fact that world capitalism has been weakened does not translate into a burst forward of working-class struggles or an advance for independent labor political action and organization. It does not mean that the working class conquered new ground.

Similarly, the collapse of the Stalinist apparatuses does not, on its own, increase the size of the communist movement. It is one thing to celebrate the collapse of these oppressive regimes and to recognize that this tears down the greatest obstacle to drawing workers into world politics and leading the best of them to communist conclusions and organization.

But it is another thing to say the working class in these countries has been strengthened politically or organizationally; it hasn't been. In order for communist leadership to be qualitatively expanded, the class struggle must first sharpen and expand.

The most important thing for class-conscious workers to understand, however, is that communists are in a better position today than at any time since the opening years of the Russian revolution to fight for proletarian leadership of revolutionary struggles as they develop. And the worst mistake we can make is to think that the rulers, that the enemies of the working class, are stronger than they are. To the contrary, they are weaker than they appear.

Everything we might think is strong—if we believed the bourgeois propaganda—is actually weaker than it seems. The rulers'



"For most of the political lives of many of us, we thought of NATO as a thing. Even at its strongest, however, NATO was never a thing; it was the registration of a certain international relationship of class forces. It was a name for a collection of imperialist nation-states, each with its own government, its own armed forces, its own currency, and its own class interests." Above, French convoy heading to join NATO forces in Macedonia February 1999, one month before U.S.-led bombing of Yugoslavia.

moves are moves from weakness, not strength. They are moves marked by the extended, deflation-biased wave of capitalist development since the opening half of the 1970s.

This closing month of 1994 has been a particularly good one for illustrations. The peso was weaker than it seemed, wasn't it? NAFTA was weaker than it seemed. The U.S. dollar is weaker than it seemed (and at the same time *relatively* stronger compared not only to the Mexican peso or Canadian dollar but to the currencies of its rivals in Europe and Japan). The Russian army is weaker than it seemed.

What about NATO? NATO is not only weaker than it seems; it is not even an organization, contrary to what the name North Atlantic Treaty Organization implies, and it is less of an alliance than ever before. For most of the political lives of many of us, we thought of NATO as a thing. Even at its strongest, however, NATO was never a thing; it was the registration of a certain international relationship of class forces. It was a name for a collection of imperialist nation-states, each with its own government, its own armed forces, its own currency, and its own class interests. But we used shorthand, as human beings do, and fetishized the NATO alliance (with no substantial damage to our political orientation, in this case, I should add).

With the collapse of the Soviet bloc and Warsaw Pact, however, the rulers of the various European and North American capitalist powers no longer have any commonly perceived threat greater than their own diverging interests that would impel them to pay the price they once did to huddle under Washington's strategic nuclear umbrella. At the same time the imperialist rulers, and the masters of U.S. finance capital above all, want to place themselves in the strongest position militarily under these new conditions to someday roll back the remaining conquests of the Bolshevik-led revolution in Russia and reimpose the unimpeded dominance of capitalist exploitation.

Let's look at another ruling-class institution: the Catholic Church. The Holy Apostolic Church of Rome is today weaker than at any time in the modern period. Pope John Paul II is *Time* magazine's man of the year

for 1994; the issue is on the stands at grocery counters right now. That should tell us something right there. I'm sure some of us can remember when Richard Nixon was *Time*'s man of the year, or a while later Mikhail Gorbachev!

But bourgeois propagandists have sought to create an image around John Paul of a new church militant, a church on the march. The first Central European pope, a Polish pope who allegedly brought down communism. A church that will not only speak its mind but will mobilize the faithful and wage a fight against abortion rights and contraception.

But the truth is that the Catholic Church is weaker than ever in its modern history. Never before has there been such a gap between the real views, the real practices, and the real doubts of the faithful, on the one hand, and the doctrine of the hierarchy, on the other. The hierarchy cannot get a majority of the faithful to agree with their line on birth control or with their line on abortion. And this phenomenon is not limited to the United States; even in Ireland the grip of the hierarchy has slipped, and perhaps the greatest gap of all is in Italy, the Vatican's home base.

Why is it, then, that institutions that are actually so weak can be presented as so strong? What allows such illusions to persist?

The answer, above all, is that the international labor movement has gone for so long without any mass revolutionary leadership that speaks and acts in the interests of the working class and challenges the petty-bourgeois misleaders who parrot and trail after the bourgeoisie.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

35 CENTS **THE MILITANT** A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

May 2, 1975

BALTIMORE—A proposed city curfew ordinance against young people, which would fine parents of violators up to \$100 and/or require a jail sentence of up to ten days, has been met with strong protests from the Black community here.

The ordinance would make it illegal for people under the age of seventeen to be on the streets or in public places after 10:30 p.m. on weekdays and 12:00 midnight on weekends.

The proposed ordinance follows a well-orchestrated press campaign against "youth crime" and "juvenile unrest." Blacks are the main targets of the campaign.

The city council has held public hearings on the proposed ordinance and opposition to it has built up at each successive one.

At the final hearing, more than 200 people turned out to demand that the proposed ordinance be killed. The city council, stung by the great majority of opposing speakers, abruptly terminated the hearing long before its scheduled end, and fled out the back door.

"I don't want my freedom taken away," explained a Southern High School student. "Besides, it's not young people who are causing the problems in this country."

The sentiment of the gathering was perhaps best summed up by a Black parent who said, "I think we've got to tell the city council to give us some jobs, swimming pools, and improved education, and not to sweep our young people off the streets."

THE MILITANT PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

May 1, 1950

American imperialism is waging war in the Philippines—a war directed against the Filipino people in an effort to stamp out the greatest popular uprising seen in the Islands since the Spanish conquest 400 years ago.

Fighter-bomber planes are bombing and strafing jungle villages. Artillery fire reverberates through the mountains. Warships stand offshore and pour destructive fire into areas where "rebel" forces are operating.

Leading the insurrectionary struggle of the people is the Hukbalahap, a peasant guerrilla organization formed in 1942 at the beginning of the Japanese occupation.

The Huks fought against the Japanese in collaboration with the Americans who smuggled arms to them. These peasant warriors linked the struggle against the invader to hopes for a better life after the war. The U.S. imperialists encouraged these hopes.

Wherever the Huks succeeded in wresting territory from the Japanese, they divided the landlords' estates and set up their own village governments.

If peasants had any illusions as to the postwar intentions of the U.S. imperialists, with their fine phrases about liberty and democracy, there were rudely shattered by the "liberation" of the islands in 1944-45. One of MacArthur's first acts after landing on the main island of Luzon was to order the arrest of the Huk leaders and the restoration of the confiscated estates to the landlords.

Wal-Mart workers fight for union

Wal-Mart meat cutters in Texas are standing up to notorious antiunion bosses and the hardball tactics the company is employing against the workers' drive to organize.

Like tens of thousands of workers around the country who have no union, the meat cutters are seeking to get organized and join one in order to defend themselves and their rights against this retail giant. Their struggle has forced a crack in the nonunion stance of the company and won them national recognition. Meat cutters in other Wal-Mart stores are starting to follow suit.

The labor movement can bring its weight to bear behind this fight and oppose the company's moves to break the incipient union organization before it gains a toehold. While Wal-Mart may have been planning to bring in case-ready meat for some time, the timing of its announcement, immediately following the first union representation victory in Jacksonville, Texas, was lost on no one. Now the company is challenging the right of current employees to even vote for a union because the company has plans in the future to eliminate their jobs.

Wal-Mart worries that if this small number of workers can stand up, organize, and vote in a union, then tens of thousands of other employees at this retail giant might get the same idea. The company has built a multibillion dollar empire on low wages, part-time work, arbitrary work rules, and substandard benefits.

At the same time, "*Si se puede*"—yes, it can be done, is the slogan of thousands of striking janitors in Los Angeles who are fighting for a wage increase and dignity. The janitors, and growing numbers of workers across the country, are resisting the bosses' assaults on our living and

working conditions. Thousands of janitors who work in downtown Chicago won their demands hours after walking off the job.

These struggles highlight broader developments in the labor movement and the change in thinking among many working people. They reflect a proletarian movement developing among fighters, who are extending a hand of solidarity from one struggle to the next.

"It's not good that these companies are making so much money while they're benefiting from the low wages they pay us," explained a janitor in California. Many of these workers earn the lowest pay among unionized workers in the United States. But they are refusing to remain a source of cheap labor for the bosses, while existing in substandard, crowded living conditions.

Class-conscious fighters can embrace these rising labor actions and reach out to vanguard layers with the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and Pathfinder titles like *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions*. As this book explains, these struggles "show why only the working class can lead humanity out of the social crisis endemic to capitalism in its decline."

The stock market's volatility reinforces what many workers sense: that this social system is heading toward social and economic devastation. Out of their continued resistance, growing class-struggle experience, and gaining of a scientific understanding of the road forward for working people will come a tested leadership and broad battalions of labor that can defend the interests of working people.

Vieques and the anticolonial fight

One year ago on April 19, during Washington's war against Yugoslavia, a U.S. Navy warplane on bombing practice over the Puerto Rican island of Vieques "accidentally" dropped a 500-pound bomb, killing island resident David Sanes. That latest crime in half a century of U.S. military occupation of Vieques detonated a deep-going struggle that has involved tens of thousands of working people, students, and others in Puerto Rico and increasingly in U.S. cities with Puerto Rican communities.

U.S. and Puerto Rican colonial officials have tried every trick in their book—threats of arrests, terrorist-baiting, offers of money, stalling tactics—but have failed to stem the widening movement. Instead, the cry of "Not one more bomb—U.S. Navy out of Vieques" has captured the convictions of millions.

As Cuban president Fidel Castro pointed out to 6,000 youth at a continental student conference in Havana, "Puerto Rico is a small nation at the doorstep of U.S. imperialism, under its colonial boot. The people of Puerto Rico don't have nuclear weapons. But they may be on the verge of forcing the hated U.S. Navy to stop bombing Vieques. That's not a small feat!" The U.S. rulers are not as powerful as they seem, the Cuban revolutionary leader correctly pointed out. They can be defeated if there is a powerful enough movement of millions.

Pro-colonial politicians in Puerto Rico, and Democratic Party politicians in the United States, have jumped onto the Vieques bandwagon and have unsuccessfully tried to derail the fight into support for big-business parties. But the driving force behind the mass protests against the U.S.

Navy and related struggles has been workers, fishermen, and youth who want to stand up to Washington. The class divisions have become clearer through this struggle, helping cut through the illusion of a "national consensus."

Capitalist politicians are rightly fearful that, while the majority of Puerto Ricans are not pro-independence today, the fight to get the U.S. military out of Vieques has given an unprecedented hearing to those who explain that independence from U.S. colonial rule is both necessary and possible. And it has put the working class in a stronger position to fight for its interests against the employers.

In fact, the fight to win Puerto Rico's sovereignty from U.S. rule is 100 percent in the interests of the vast majority of the people of the United States. Working people in this country and the Puerto Rican people face a common enemy—Washington and the exploiting minority it represents.

The best example today of a successful road to national sovereignty is revolutionary Cuba. In Puerto Rico's sister nation, workers and farmers swept the parasitic wealthy minority out of power and took the reins themselves, breaking U.S. domination.

The rising national struggle in Puerto Rico is part of the pattern of renewed resistance by workers and farmers throughout Latin America—from Bolivia and Ecuador to Costa Rica—as well as in the United States and Canada. Fighters against the U.S. Navy in Puerto Rico and union and farm militants here will find common strength as they link up with each other. That is a process to encourage.

Washington cops trample on rights

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—The capitalist news media in this city is flush with accounts of measured use of force by police officials during protests against the IMF and World Bank. One even carried a photo of police chief Charles Ramsey carrying a rose, allegedly given to him by a protester, and a nightstick.

For days leading up to the protest, TV and newspapers carried pictures of D.C.-area's "finest" practicing "crowd control maneuvers" and training in the use of nightsticks. These organized displays of police force have not been lost on working people in this city.

Ramsey, who is Black, came in as police chief in the wake of a corruption scandal involving the former chief and increasing incidents of police brutality. But a 1998 report in the *Washington Post* revealed that cops here now lead the country in incidents of shootings and brutality.

Ramsey explained that \$1 million had been spent on new riot gear and \$5 million on overtime pay. Throughout the downtown area of the city an increased number of cops could be seen dressed in the black helmets, bullet-proof vests, and shin, chest, and arm guards.

According to a *Washington Post* report, Ramsey refused to say how many cops would be on the streets, only that the entire 3,500-plus department had been "activated." In addition, Ramsey enlisted cops from nearby Virginia and Maryland jurisdictions of Arlington, Prince George's, and Montgomery counties. Prince George's county cops are notorious for the number of Blacks who have been killed

during an arrest or while in their custody.

By the end of the days of protest, police had arrested nearly 1,300 protesters, most on the charge of "parading without a permit." Police cleared a 10-block area surrounding the buildings of the IMF and World Bank for most of the week. At the height of the protests 90 downtown blocks were closed to traffic. In a few clashes police clubbed demonstrators, used pepper spray, smoke canisters, and threatened them with their cars and motorcycles. Police helicopters often hovered low over demonstrators.

In an early morning raid April 16, cops and city fire officials shut down the headquarters used as an organizing center for the various protests. This warehouse was located in Columbia Heights, a largely Latino and Black working class section of the city. The cops ordered as many as 200 people out of the building which also served as mass housing, cordoned off the block, and brought in bomb-sniffing dogs. But the cops only came away with puppets used in street theater, banners, and office supplies.

There were several news accounts of bystanders caught up in police arrests. Brandy Wirrer, 20, from Mahtomedi, Minnesota, was picked up in a police sweep after shopping in nearby Georgetown. She, like many others, spent 12 hours handcuffed on a bus or in a police holding room, often without water or toilet facilities.

Sam Manuel is a member of the United Transportation Union.

Youth meet in Cuba

Continued from Page 7

sented the underlying problem in Mexico that led the ruling class to attempt the tuition hikes and partial privatization of UNAM—and that has resulted in over 30 percent unemployment and more than 40 percent of the population of Mexico living under the poverty level—as "neoliberal" policies that need to be shelved and replaced by a "regulated capitalism, with state intervention."

Others, however, argued that the problem is imperialist domination and the solution lies in orienting to the working class and its allies, who are resisting more tenaciously the bourgeois offensive on both sides of the Mexican border, and working to build organizations that can lead working people to revolution, like the Cuban revolution.

When Daniel Ortega, former president of Nicaragua and central leader of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), and José Irso, representing the leadership of the Workers Party (PT) of Brazil, spoke back-to-back at the largest workshop April 3, they received a good response by many of the delegates. They both spoke vaguely of the need for radical change in Latin America. The road to that, they said, are electoral alliances with "progressive" bourgeois forces that could bring "the left to power."

Student leaders who espoused such views had a heavier weight on the panels of the commissions that ultimately played a larger role on what is presented as consensus agreements. They are well to the right of most rank-and-file students attracted to the proletariat. The final declaration adopted by the congress does not mention the word socialism and states that students "struggle for the sovereignty of our countries and for real democracies with freedom...and an economy in the service of men and women living in harmony with nature."

A few delegates tried to take these points on. "There is only one alternative to capitalism," said Ernesto Fernando Sánchez of FEU from Cuba. "Here in Cuba we call it socialism. We look to José Martí and our own history on how to achieve this. But we must also learn from Che and Marx, Engels, and Lenin."

Firsthand look of Cuban revolution

While most of the work of the congress was conducted at the commissions and plenary sessions, most delegates had several chances to also get a firsthand glance at the reality of Cuba today.

Those who came prior to the congress visited the Museum of the Revolution and a number of neighborhoods in Havana on their own. During the conference, all delegates were asked to take one day for an alternative program that included visits to schools, hospitals, the pioneer palace, Expo Cuba, and other sites. By all accounts, the activity along these lines that aroused the most interest was spending an evening with Cuban families at a variety of neighborhoods. These were organized at 400 different locations in Havana by the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution.

Substantial time during the congress was also dedicated to two Open Tribunals and other discussions on the fight to return Elián González to Cuba. The six-year-old Cuban boy was rescued off the Florida coast last November after his mother and others on board a vessel drowned when it capsized after leaving Cuba.

The Cuban government has supported the demand of the boy's father, Juan Miguel González, and other relatives in Cuba that Elián be repatriated immediately. The boy is still in Miami where distant relatives are trying to keep him with the support of many among the U.S. rulers.

Castro devoted a major portion of his April 5 speech on the details of this case, including the announcement that Juan Miguel González would be leaving for Washington, D.C., in pursuit of his son the next morning. The congress passed a resolution demanding Elián's return to Cuba and calling for open tribunals in front of U.S. embassies around the world to press this case.

'For a world without borders'

The final plenary session of the congress was largely devoted to reading the resolutions adopted by the commissions, as well as the final declaration the delegates approved.

The results of the election for OCLAE's leadership body, the executive secretariat, were also announced. The election was held the previous day by representatives of the organization's member groups. FEU of Cuba was re-elected to the presidency, and Yosvani Díaz Romero remains in that post. The executive secretariat includes representatives of the National Union of Students of Nicaragua, the Union of High School Students of Brazil, the Federation of University Students of Argentina, National Student Association of Colombia, FUPI of Puerto Rico, and the Federation of University Students of Ecuador.

During the last session, Iraklis Tsaldaridis, president of the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY), announced that the 15th world youth festival will take place in the summer of 2001. The first international preparatory meeting to begin building this gathering will take place in Havana June 20–22. The WFDY leadership will propose the festival be held in Algeria. The last one was held in Cuba in the summer of 1997. Tsaldaridis invited all those present to take part in building these meetings.

In concluding his speech to the delegates, Fidel Castro reminded them of the theme of Latin American unity that ran through the congress. You must go beyond that, the Cuban president said. "Struggle for a world without borders. A world where 'our country' will become humanity."

Samantha Kern, organizer of the National Executive Committee of the Young Socialists, contributed to this article.

Striking unionists march in Washington state

BY SCOTT BREEN

SUNNYSIDE, Washington—Striking workers at a housing manufacturer led a lively march through this city April 8.

Bolstered by Steelworkers locked out by Kaiser Aluminum in Spokane, 350 workers, their families, and supporters paraded past Valley Manufactured Housing (VMH), through the downtown district, and then to a nearby park for a solidarity rally and barbecue.

As the marchers walked, many onlookers clapped their hands in sympathy, and several young people watching from the sidewalk joined in as they passed by. The route was punctuated by chants in both Spanish and English of "Si, Se Puede" (Yes, we can!), and "No contract, No peace," and many others as the bullhorns were passed between the strikers, who are mostly Mexican immigrants, and the Steelworkers.

Also marching were meat packers who had struck Iowa Beef Processors (IBP) last summer; small delegations from several lumber mills in Oregon, Idaho, and Washington, organized by the Western Council of Industrial Workers (WCW); fruit packers from area warehouses; and students from MEChA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Atzlan).

Frank Rivera, who has worked at VMH for six years, marched with his three children. He thought the solidarity brought by the Kaiser steelworkers "was fantastic." "This march," he continued, "should be a big help. It has already sent a message to the company." He was referring to VMH's decision a few days prior to the march to reopen negotiations with the union.

The strikers are members of WCW Local 2739, which is affiliated with the Carpenters union. They struck Valley Manufactured Housing August 25 for better wages, an end to mandatory overtime, and against higher medical premiums the company was demanding. The company refused to increase the wage rates, which start at only \$6.65 an hour and top out at \$8.50. Medical insurance

costs about \$150 per month.

Since the strike began, 20 to 30 members crossed the picket lines, leaving about 135 out on strike. The company has hired about 150 replacement workers, most of whom are also Mexican immigrants. Since October, it has refused to negotiate with the union. VMH is one of the largest private employers in the lower Yakima Valley.

The union itself is relatively new. The workers at VMH were inspired by the victory of the United Farm Workers union in winning its first contract in Washington state at Chateau Ste. Michelle vineyards in Sunnyside in 1995. The VMH workers went on strike at that time without a union, but joined the Carpenters union during the strike, winning recognition from VMH and a contract.

Marcos Valencia, who has worked there for seven years, hoped there would be more such actions. He didn't know if they would win this battle, but was dead set on taking VMH down with the strike. "I hope we break them," he said, "so that next time, they'll take us more seriously."

The action was supported by the Washington State Labor Council of the AFL-CIO, which sent out a letter to all its affiliated unions announcing the April 8 march and asking for donations for the WCW Food Bank.

Several of those who participated in the action talked about important battles shaping up in the Yakima Valley, a major agricultural center in Washington state. Workers at Boise Cascade lumber mill in Yakima explained that their contract, along with all other Boise Cascade contracts in the Northwest, is up June 1. They think a fight is likely.

Activists were preparing for a fight to win higher wages for farmworkers during the short cherry-picking season that starts around June 1, and to defend immigrant rights. They were promoting a "March for Amnesty and Just Wages" on June 4 in Pasco, Washington. Warehouse workers spoke of an organizing

drive by the Teamsters union at Yakima Fruit in Wapato; a union election is set for May 4, they said.

The steelworkers stopped in Sunnyside for the march after protesting at the state legislature in Olympia for extended unemployment benefits for the locked-out Kaiser workers. Although the bill authorizing the extension died in the Washington House of Representatives, they were keen on keeping up the struggle.

"Labor is a sleeping giant, and they've been poking a stick at us too long," exclaimed Clint Wells, a crane operator for 22 years at

Kaiser's Mead plant in Spokane. "I'm looking forward to going to more labor actions" like the one today in Sunnyside, he said.

Three days after the march, VMH met with union negotiators for just five minutes, enough time to tell the union that it had nothing new to offer the strikers. Company attorney Ryan Edgley told the *Yakima Herald-Republic*, "The company is convinced that for the type of workers we have, we're offering a reasonable proposal."

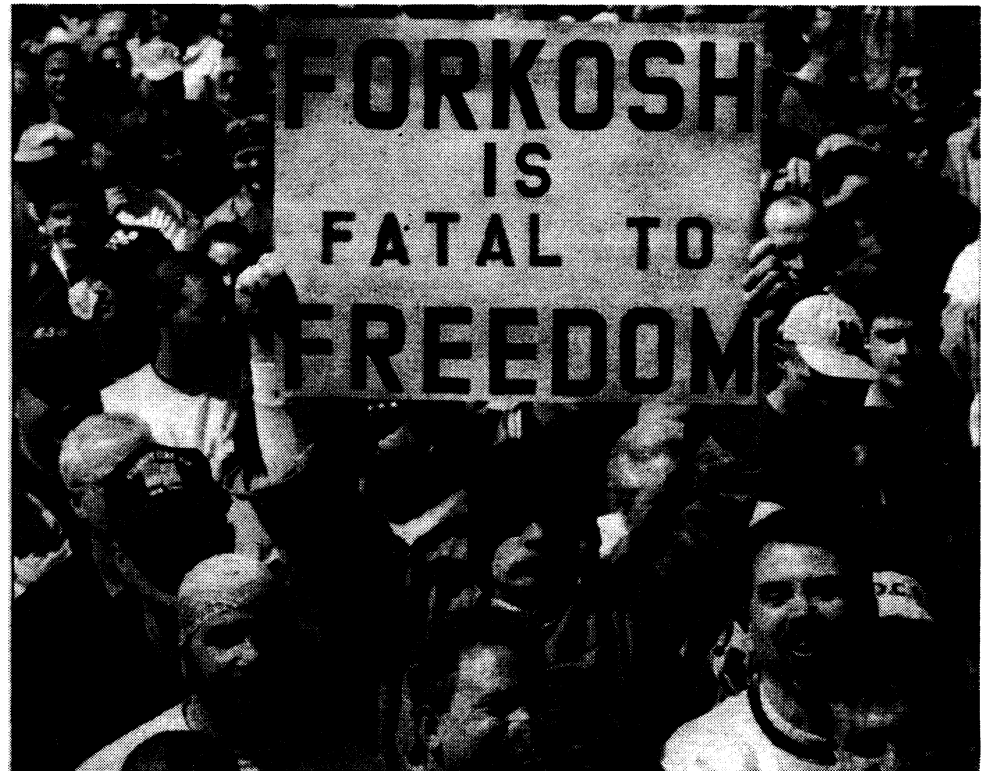
Scott Breen is a member of International Association of Machinists, Local 751 in Seattle.

Construction workers rally for union

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

NEW YORK—Thousands of construction workers and their supporters amassed at 14th Street and Third Avenue in Manhattan April 13, solidly condemning a decision by New York University management to use non-

workers, given that many of the workers employed by Forkosh hail from other countries. "We're not against nonunion workers, we're against nonunion contractors. God bless anyone trying to make a living. They pay somebody \$6 an hour for a job that they



Carpenters union members marched April 13 against use of nonunion contractor Forkosh by New York University management in construction of a student dormitory.

union contractor Alex Forkosh to build a student dormitory. Protesters marched several blocks during lunch hour to Washington Square Park for a rally.

This demonstration came a day after 5,500 building workers took to the streets demanding better wages and working conditions. It was the largest action of construction workers in the city since the June 1998 protest that drew 40,000 participants. A giant inflated rat, a prop well known among construction workers, representing both scabs and nonunion employers, was also present at the event.

After the rally several workers spoke to the *Militant*. John Hyland, a union construction worker for more than 21 years and a member of Carpenters Union Local 608, insisted on making his opinion clear about immigrant

should be paid \$30 for. They are usually immigrant workers," he said. "I wish everyone of them could get union scale wages. They're not the problem. It's the greedy bastards they work for."

Robert Marchak, who has been a construction worker for 20 years, said, "They are always looking to increase their profit margin. Benefits are important. If you risk your life every day hanging off of buildings, you deserve some health benefits and a decent retirement. Nonunion workers get no benefits." Posing a question to the bosses, Marchak commented, "I made you a million dollars; can I get a tooth fixed? They hire part-time so they don't have to pay benefits, like UPS."

Hyland stated that over the last five years or so "we have begun to get more militant."

Electrical workers picket 'for dignity'

BY DEBBIE DELANGE

MANCHESTER, England—Workers at the Electrium electrical assembly plant here have set up pickets in pursuit of a pay raise. The workers are members of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union (AEEU). The union began the action March 6 and has organized a different section of the workforce to go on strike one day a week.

"They're going to have to give in because we won't. There's different people turning up each week who weren't here at the beginning," said Linda Greenhalgh. She explained that although the strike was solidly supported by union members from the start, picketing was now becoming more popular.

A handful of workers left the union early in the strike, but strikers were heartened that some others joined them. "At first we could only stand at this gate, but now we can go to the other gates as well. That stops them from sneaking round."

The mood of the 30 or so pickets was buoyant. "Feelings are running very high," said Carole Francis, who has worked at the factory for 27 years. "We know now they're making a lot of money, but it's not showing on the shop floor. They've even stopped the sick pay for strikers," she said.

The bosses offered a 2 percent pay raise and improvements to the sick pay scheme. The pay increase would be retroactive to last July, but the bosses recently threatened strikers with losing the lump sum payment of back wages if the dispute continued.

This has hardened workers' attitudes, with many saying that since they received the letter they have become more determined to stay out as long as it takes. "The back pay is quite a lot of money," said Francis. "But its not about money now, it's about dignity."

Debbie Delange is a member of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union.

LETTERS

Longshore workers fight

I noticed when I read Lauren Hart's article in the April 17, 2000, issue that the workers in ILA Local 1422 in Charleston, South Carolina, had received donations from various longshore or dockers locals. The union on the west coast is the ILWU, the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, not the International Longshore Association. I don't know which locals contributed in British Columbia, but the local in Vancouver is LU 500. Otherwise, this is a good article, one I will point out to people I sell to at the BC Maritime Employers Dispatch Center.

Lucien Lenoire
Vancouver, Canada

New rail union in N.Y.

On February 28, 2000, the overwhelming majority of conductors and engineers at Metro-North Commuter Railroad in New York City, decided to form a union called The

Association of Commuter Rail Employees (ACRE). Prior to the formation of ACRE, they were members of two national industrial unions—the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE) and the United Transportation Union (UTU).

The idea of splitting from the Internationals was initiated and organized by the local leaderships of the BLE and UTU. The campaign to organize ACRE started around December of 1998. These officials argued that the UTU focuses primarily on freight workers and not passenger engineers. Therefore—it was argued—they are taking our money and we are essentially getting nothing in return, and the money would be better used locally.

ACRE literature focused on the need to form a more "democratic union" which would write its own constitution and bylaws. This would be the route to "self-determination" and the ability to take care of "ourselves." The rank and

file's discussions, on the other hand, focused on the idea that what this was all about was who controls the money. There were discussions about how to take our unions back, solidarity with freight workers, and other striking workers around the country.

ACRE is starting to organize monthly union meetings and continuing to get engineers to leave the BLE local. The majority of engineers are staying with ACRE, for various reasons. Some feel it best to stay with the majority, while many feel we should give it a try and see what happens.

Barbara Peterson
Wendy Banen
New York, New York

Support Abu-Jamal fight

I was among 700 participants in a New York Emergency Conference to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal held February 19. This month federal judge William Yohn will hear oral arguments and rule on whether

Mumia's lawyers will be allowed to present evidence that was suppressed in the Pennsylvania courts.

Under the "Effective Death Penalty Act" of 1996 federal judges are now supposed to accept the finding of state courts. Leonard Weinglass, Abu-Jamal's attorney, explained, "President Clinton signed the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996.... It's part and parcel of what's happening both in civil law and in criminal law across the board if you follow the actions of the United States Supreme Court. We are back to the states' rights movement of the '50s."

A National Emergency Mobilization to Philadelphia has been called for Mumia's first day in court at the critical oral arguments on whether there will be an evidentiary hearing by Judge Yohn. This ruling will determine whether Abu-Jamal's state conviction will be overturned.

Actions that are being organized include weekly "Honk for Mumia" picket lines outside the federal court

buildings in Philadelphia to build support for mobilizations planned for April and May. A Madison Square Garden Rally for Mumia is scheduled for Sunday May 7, at 2:00 p.m. On May 13—the 15th anniversary of the police bombing of the MOVE headquarters in Philadelphia—there will be demonstrations in San Francisco and Philadelphia. There will be a Mothers March Against Police Terror in Philadelphia and the Western Regional Mass Demonstration for Mumia in San Francisco.

Connie Allen
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers.

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Thousands march for jobs in South Africa

BY T.J. FIGUEROA

PRETORIA, South Africa—In a fighting mood, more than 100,000 workers organized by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) have marched since early last month to demand action to stem the jobs meltdown in South Africa.

The largest of these demonstrations drew tens of thousands of unionists, many of them miners, to central Johannesburg on April 12. About 7,000 marched in Pretoria on April 5. More than 20,000 joined protests throughout the Eastern Cape province on March 8 and thousands marched in Cape Town on March 15.

These protests, including a large rally scheduled for May Day, are building up to a one-day general strike on May 10.

The Johannesburg action was reported to be the largest action in that city since apartheid rule ended in 1994. The union federation estimated that between 60,000 and 100,000 took part. Police put the number at 10,000.

The marches have met with disapproval from the big-business press and spokespeople for capital, along with some government officials, who declare that they are for creating jobs, but that protests are "counterproductive." Economist Tony Twine said that COSATU's campaign



CDC Photo Unit/Xolo Tshabalala

Workers demonstrate in COSATU action April 12 in Johannesburg, South Africa.

"makes business want to employ less labor rather than more. It does not do our image abroad any good and that image is vital in our attempts to attract investments."

Fighting workers are not buying into this

argument. Leonard Motletse from GaRankuwa marched here on April 5. "How can the government speak of economic growth when thousands of people are losing their jobs?" he asked. Vincent Maledimo

from Soshanguve said, "I'm here because our jobs are being given away in the name of privatization."

"Workers demand a job-creating economy," read one poster. "Retrenchment equals hunger," said another. COSATU says that since 1994, more than 500,000 jobs have been destroyed by capital, and as a result of government layoffs.

"Thousands of quality jobs have been replaced by casualized, subcontracted, sweatshop, and temporary jobs that push more and more of the working class into poverty. As a result of these strategies and the persistence of low wages in many sectors, the army of the working poor is growing by the day. According to the 1996 census, 26 percent of workers earned less than R500 a month [\$76 at current exchange rates]," said a statement issued by the federation for the Johannesburg demonstration.

Willie Madisha, the COSATU president, told the Johannesburg protesters that there was an "investment strike" in the country. Addressing his words to the employers, he said, "This is your chance to show your patriotism and create jobs that are desperately needed. We urge you to refrain from investing your money in the Johannesburg Stock Exchange and the London and New York Stock Exchanges. You have until May 1 to respond, or else you will face an unprecedented general strike on May 10."

Specific demands put forward by COSATU include amending labor law to make employers negotiate with unions on layoffs; slowing the pace of import tariff reductions; a basic grant for unemployed workers; and union involvement in talks on privatization of state assets.

Until now there has been no wholesale privatization of government-run entities. Instead, hunks of state-run companies have been sold to capitalist investors from abroad.

Public enterprises minister Jeff Radebe announced on April 14 that the government hoped to accelerate and complete the "restructuring" of the telephone utility, the rail and ports utility, a military hardware manufacturer, and the power utility by 2004. He told a news conference that some layoffs would be necessary.

Kaiser fines 'justified,' say locked-out workers

BY MIYO YAMAMOTO

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama—The federal Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) on March 15 fined Kaiser Aluminum \$533,000 for 21 violations connected with an explosion at its Gramercy, Louisiana, alumina refinery. The July 5, 1999, explosion injured 26 workers, destroyed most of the plant, broke windows throughout the neighborhood and rained caustic chemicals on the surrounding community.

"These fines were justified," declared Whitney Jasmin in a telephone interview. Jasmin is a member of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) and has been locked out by Kaiser since January 1999. "The explosion would never have happened if they had done the right thing to begin with and kept qualified people in the plant."

The plant has been closed since the explosion. MSHA charged the company with serious violations of mandatory safety standards and other regulations, 13 of the 21 being the most severe kind of citation the agency can issue. Some of the cited violations include inoperative pressure valve systems, blocked pressure relief piping, routine operation of pressure vessels beyond their design capacity, inadequate safety training, and lack of proper protective equipment. In addition, Kaiser was charged with seven counts of impeding or interfering with MSHA's investigation.

Hamilton Steib, another locked-out

worker, agreed on the telephone with Jasmin, saying, "The fines just weren't sufficient for that type of violation. They should have been fined millions for endangering people's lives and health."

USWA members at Kaiser struck on September 30, 1998, over cuts in retiree health insurance benefits, seniority, job security, pensions, and wages.

On January 13, 1999, they offered to return to work while continuing to negotiate, but the next day, the company locked out more than 2,900 USWA members at five plants in Gramercy, Louisiana; Newark, Ohio; and Spokane and Tacoma, Washington. The plants have been operating with management and replacement workers.

Jasmin also reported that 50 to 60 locked-out workers and their supporters went to court in Gramercy on April 10. Six workers were on trial for offenses on the picket line. The judge found two of them guilty and suspended them from the picket line for the next six months. He threatened to put them in jail if they came back to court again. "So now we can't yell at the scabs when they cross our line," Jasmin commented.

The USWA is planning to bring locked-out members from around the country to converge at the Kaiser Aluminum annual stockholders' meeting in Houston on May 24. Last year's demonstrations attracted unionists and youth from Houston, and were marked by their enthusiasm and energy.

Korean auto workers carry out job actions

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Taking a stand against what they sense will be massive layoffs and concession demands, workers at four south Korean car companies are staging industrial actions across the country.

The workers are pressing wage demands and opposing the buying up of Daewoo and Ssangyong companies by U.S., German, and Italian auto giants.

On April 6 production at Hyundai, Kia, Daewoo, and Ssangyong Motors ground to

a halt in the face of a concerted strike. Workers at Kia and Hyundai have since returned to work. Kia workers are now refusing extra duties and overtime. Employees at Hyundai—the largest south Korean car maker—decided April 15 to suspend their strike, monitor progress on wages, and reconsider what course of action to take by April 19.

After the first week of the walkout, the car companies reported losses of 74,500 cars worth 76.5 billion Won (US\$1 = 1,110 Won). At more than 43 billion Won, Hyundai's loss was the greatest.

The *Korea Times* opposed the strike, editorializing on April 14 that "the seven-day strike might be successful for the solidarity of auto workers of the four companies... [but] would inevitably frustrate the potential foreign investors who must feel uneasy about the power wielded by hawkish labor unions."

The auto workers oppose the sale of Daewoo Motors and Ssangyong to foreign companies, explaining that mass layoffs will follow. DaimlerChrysler, Fiat, and the U.S. auto giants Ford and General Motors are lined up as potential suitors for Daewoo, whose deficit reached nearly \$5.4 billion in June last year. Hyundai is also a contender. However, according to the *Korea Times*, a report by a major bank has stated "foreign ownership is the most preferred solution."

"The attraction of foreign investment has been a decisive key to the revitalization of the national economy which was forced to the brink of bankruptcy just two and a half years ago," continued the editorial, referring

to the economic crisis that began in mid-1997.

On the heels of a glowing report by the International Monetary Fund, which predicted an economic expansion of 7 percent this year, the south Korean stock market suffered its biggest loss ever on April 17. In the wake of the big slide on Wall St. the previous Friday, the Kospi index fell 12 percent. The Korean market has lost nearly a third of its value in dollar terms since last December.

Bolivian gov't backs off water price rise

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Under pressure from recent protests by workers and farmers in Bolivia, the nation's congress passed legislation revising a planned water hike.

The bill halted plans to peg water rates to the U.S. dollar and to force peasants to start paying for the use of water from wells. The government also canceled its contract with Aguas del Tunari, a foreign investment project led by the London-based International Water Limited that would have boosted water rates as much as 35 percent. Among the major owners of this company is the U.S. company Bechtel Enterprise Holdings. Working people in Bolivia already pay 10 to 15 percent of their household income for water.

Peasants had blocked roads on several national highways in five of the country's nine provinces. Workers and youth joined the protests in a many cities throughout Bo-

livia, including La Paz, Cochabamba, Oruro, Chusaca, San Joaquin, and Beni. High in the Andes mountains, a strike shut down the mining city of Potosi.

Meanwhile, the Bolivian Congress on April 13 approved the emergency decree issued by President Hugo Banzer in an effort to quell the protests. The decree allows cops to detain people without a warrant, impose curfews, and restrict travel and political activity. It remains in force for 90 days. Banzer, who in the 1970s ruled Bolivia with dictatorial powers, is the fourth president of this South American nation to declare a state of emergency.

A general strike called by the Bolivian Workers Confederation (COB) for April 12 did not occur. The COB, however, is organizing a mobilization on April 17 to commemorate the 48th anniversary of its founding and to protest the state of emergency.

For further reading

The Struggle for a Proletarian Party

James P. Cannon

In this companion to Trotsky's *In Defense of Marxism*, Cannon and other leaders of the Socialist Workers Party defend the centrality of proletarianization within the political and organizational principles of Marxism in a polemic against a petty-bourgeois current in the party. The debate unfolded as Washington prepared to drag U.S. working people into the slaughter of World War II.

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